United Nations S/2018/970

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 October 2018

Original: English

United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling and *reaffirming* all its previous resolutions on Western Sahara,

Reaffirming its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to implement resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), 1979 (2011), 2044 (2012), 2099 (2013), 2152 (2014), 2218 (2015), 2285 (2016), 2351 (2017), and 2414 (2018),

Expressing full support for the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, former President Horst Köhler of Germany, and *welcoming* the engagement of the parties and neighboring states with him in his efforts to facilitate direct negotiations,

Welcoming the decision by the Personal Envoy to hold an initial roundtable meeting in Geneva on December 5–6, 2018, to take stock of recent developments, address regional issues, and discuss the next steps in the political process on Western Sahara,

Further welcoming the decisions of Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria and Mauritania to accept the invitation of the Personal Envoy to participate in a roundtable meeting in Geneva on December 5–6, 2018, without preconditions and in good faith, and *welcoming* consultations between the Personal Envoy and Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria and Mauritania in this regard,

Reaffirming its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and *noting* the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect,

Reiterating its call upon the parties and the neighboring states to cooperate more fully with the United Nations and with each other, to strengthen their involvement in the political process and to achieve progress towards a political solution,

Recognizing that achieving a political solution to this long-standing dispute and enhanced cooperation between the Member States of the Maghreb Arab Union would contribute to stability and security, in turn leading to jobs, growth and opportunities for all the peoples in the Sahel region,

Welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to keep all peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), under close review and reiterating the need for the Council to

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pursue a rigorous, strategic approach to peacekeeping deployments, and effective management of resources,

Recalling its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, is used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations, based on clear and well identified benchmarks, and *emphasizing* the need to regularly evaluate MINURSO's performance such that the mission retains the skills and flexibility needed to effectively carry out its mandate,

Recalling resolution 2242 (2015) and its aspiration to increase the number of women in military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations,

Recognizing the important role played by MINURSO on the ground and the need for it to fully implement its mandate, including its role in supporting the Personal Envoy to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution, and *welcoming* the Personal Envoy's visit to MINURSO headquarters and Western Sahara,

Expressing concern about the violations of existing agreements, and in this regard *welcoming* the Secretary-General's assessment on 3 October 2018 that no major threats to the ceasefire have been recorded,

Taking note of the assurances provided by the Frente Polisario to the Personal Envoy not to move administrative structures to the territory as well as its commitment to fulfill its obligations with respect to the buffer strip at Guerguerat, in line with resolution 2414 (2018), and *recognizing* that full adherence by the Frente Polisario to these commitments will help sustain momentum in the political process,

Taking note of the Moroccan proposal presented on 11 April 2007 to the Secretary-General and *welcoming* serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution; also *taking note* of the Polisario Front proposal presented 10 April 2007 to the Secretary-General,

Encouraging in this context, the parties to demonstrate further political will towards a solution including by expanding upon their discussion of each other's proposals and recommitting to UN efforts in a spirit of realism and compromise, and *further encouraging* the neighboring countries to make contributions to the political process,

Encouraging the parties to cooperate further with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in identifying and implementing confidence-building measures that can serve to foster the trust necessary for a successful political process,

Stressing the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and *encouraging* the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind their relevant obligations under international law,

Encouraging the parties to continue in their respective efforts to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara and the Tindouf refugee camps, including the freedoms of expression and association,

Welcoming in this regard, steps and initiatives taken by Morocco, and the role played by the National Council on Human Rights Commissions operating in Dakhla and Laayoune, and Morocco's interaction with Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council,

Strongly encouraging enhancing cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including through facilitating visits to the region,

Noting with deep concern the continued hardships faced by Sahrawi refugees and their dependency on external humanitarian assistance, and *further noting with deep concern* insufficient funding for those living in Tindouf refugee camps and the risks associated with the reduction of food assistance,

Reiterating its request for consideration of a refugee registration in the Tindouf refugee camps and *emphasizing* efforts be made in this regard,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2250 and related resolutions; *stressing* the importance of a commitment by the parties to continue the process of negotiations through the United Nations-sponsored talks and *encouraging* the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and active and meaningful participation of youth in these talks,

Recognizing that the status quo is not acceptable, and *noting further* that progress in negotiations is essential in order to improve the quality of life of the people of Western Sahara in all its aspects,

Affirming its full support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO Colin Stewart,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 3 October 2018 (S/2018/889),

1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2019;

2. *Emphasizes* the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution to the question of Western Sahara based on compromise and the importance of aligning the strategic focus of MINURSO and orienting resources of the United Nations to this end;

3. *Expresses* its full support for the intention of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to initiate a renewed negotiations process before the end of 2018; *notes* that invitations to an initial roundtable meeting in Geneva on 5 and 6 December 2018 were sent on 28 September 2018, *welcomes* that Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria, and Mauritania have responded positively, and *encourages* them to work constructively with the Personal Envoy, in the spirit of compromise, throughout the duration of this process to ensure a successful outcome,

4. *Calls upon* the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect;

5. *Invites* Member States to lend appropriate assistance to these talks;

6. *Reaffirms* the need for full respect of the military agreements reached with MINURSO with regard to the ceasefire and *calls on* the parties to adhere fully to those agreements;

7. *Calls upon* the parties to respect their relevant obligations and assurances, and refrain from any actions that could undermine UN-facilitated negotiations or further destabilize the situation in the Western Sahara, and *further calls* on the Frente Polisario to fully adhere to its commitments to the Personal Envoy with respect to Bir Lahlou, Tifariti, and the buffer strip at Guerguerat;

8. *Calls upon* all parties to cooperate fully with the operations of MINURSO, including its free interaction with all interlocutors, and to take the necessary steps to

ensure the security of as well as unhindered movement and immediate access for the United Nations and associated personnel in carrying out their mandate, in conformity with existing agreements;

9. *Emphasizes* the importance of a renewed commitment by the parties to advancing the political process in preparation for a fifth round of negotiations, *recalls* its endorsement of the recommendation in the report of 14 April 2008 (S/2008/251) that realism and a spirit of compromise by the parties are essential to achieve progress in negotiations, and *encourages* the neighboring countries to make important, active contributions to this process;

10. *Calls upon* the parties to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to advance negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), 1979 (2011), 2044 (2012), 2099 (2013), 2152 (2014), 2218 (2015), 2285 (2016), 2351 (2017), and 2414 (2018) and the success of negotiations;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on a regular basis, and at any time he deems appropriate during the mandate period, to include within three months of this mandate's renewal and again prior to its expiration, on the status and progress of these negotiations under his auspices, on the implementation of this resolution, challenges to MINURSO's operations and steps taken to address them, *expresses its intention* to meet to receive and discuss his briefings and in this regard, *further requests* the Secretary-General to provide a report on the situation in Western Sahara well before the end of the mandate period;

12. *Reaffirms* its support for the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear standards of performance for evaluating all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations, and calls on the United Nations to apply this framework to MINURSO, *requests* the Secretary-General to seek to increase the number of women in MINURSO, as well as to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations;

13. *Urges* the parties and neighboring states to engage productively with MINURSO as it further considers how new technologies can be used to reduce risk, improve force protection, and better implement its mandate;

14. *Encourages* the parties to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify and implement confidence-building measures, including to engage women and youth, and *encourages* neighboring states to support these efforts;

15. *Urges* Member States to provide new and additional voluntary contributions to fund food programmes to ensure that the humanitarian needs of refugees are adequately addressed and avoid reductions in food rations;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take all necessary measures to ensure full compliance in MINURSO with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council informed, and urges troop-contributing countries to take preventive action including predeployment awareness training, and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

17. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

United Nations S/2018/971

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixty-first monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see annex), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The present report covers the period from 24 September to 23 October 2018.

With regard to the outstanding issues related to the declaration of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, I note with regret that the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete. In this context, I welcome the fact that the Director-General has conveyed to the Syrian authorities the importance of resolving the outstanding issues on an expedited basis.

The OPCW fact-finding mission is continuing its work to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Duma on 7 April 2018. I look forward to the issuance of its final report on this matter in due course. I further note the continuing efforts by the fact-finding mission during the current reporting period to gather and analyse information, and to conduct interviews, relating to five other alleged incidents.

In this regard, I recall that any further possible use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic would be wholly unacceptable, and that it is therefore imperative that no impunity for those acts be permitted by the international community.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 September to 23 October 2018, as well as the reporting requirements in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the sixty-first monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 September 2018 to 23 October 2018.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 17 October 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fifty-ninth monthly report (EC-90/P/NAT.1, dated 17 October 2018) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. As stated in previous reports, on 10 July 2018 the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic with responses to the questions attached to the Director-General's letter to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Faisal Mekdad, dated 10 April 2018. These questions pertained to the chemical weapons-related activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The DAT's analysis indicated that the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic in its responses had been previously conveyed to the Secretariat.

10. In a letter to Deputy Minister Mekdad dated 28 September 2018, the Director-General shared the Secretariat's assessment of the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 July 2018, and emphasised the importance of resolving the outstanding issues on an expedited basis. Furthermore, the Director-General invited the Syrian Arab Republic to continue working to clarify all gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies identified in its declaration and subsequent submissions, and reiterated the continuing support of the Secretariat for the Syrian authorities' efforts to fully implement their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") and relevant decisions of the OPCW's policy-making organs.

11. The Director-General provided an update on the recent activities of the DAT in a Note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-89/HP/DG.2, dated 1 October 2018). In this Note, the Director-General concluded that the Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

12. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues the planning of the inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is preparing for the next inspections to be conducted at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

13. The United Nations Office for Project Services continues to provide support to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement.

14. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

15. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 17.3 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

17. On 6 July, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018" (S/1645/2018, dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic that provided comments on the interim report. The FFM continues to collect and analyse information with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma and will provide a final report on its findings in due course.

18. At the end of September 2018, the FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic to gather further information and conduct interviews regarding five reported incidents currently under investigation: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017; and one in Al-Balil, Souran on 8 November 2017. The FFM is currently analysing the information collected with regard to these incidents.

19. The Secretariat provided an update on the recent activities of the FFM in a Note entitled "Summary Update of the Activities Carried out by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (S/1677/2018, dated 10 October 2018). The Note summarises the work done by the FFM since July 2018 and the next steps in its work.

Activities related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria carried out by the Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session

20. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018) which, inter alia, addressed the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director-General to continue to provide regular

updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

21. In paragraph 10 of the decision, the Conference decided that the Secretariat shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM in Syria determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report. The Conference further decided, in paragraph 12, that the Secretariat shall preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.

22. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision, a progress report on the implementation of C-SS-4/DEC.3 entitled "Progress in the Implementation of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (EC-89/DG.29, dated 4 October 2018) was submitted to the Council at its Eighty-Ninth Session.

Conclusion

23. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.

United Nations S/2018/972

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 November 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 30 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government and further to our letters regarding the targeting of innocent Syrian civilians by the illegitimate "international coalition" led by the United States, I should like to convey to you the following:

The illegitimate "international coalition" led by the United States of America continues to commit crimes against innocent Syrian civilians. Over the past few days, coalition warplanes continued bombarding homes in the city of Hajin, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, with internationally prohibited white phosphorus bombs. On 24 and 28 October 2018, the coalition fired missiles at homes in the village of Susah, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate. Dozens of civilians, the majority of whom were women and children, including an entire family (father, mother and two children), were killed and injured as a result of the above-mentioned crimes.

The coalition continues to commit crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people, employ internationally prohibited weapons, such as white phosphorus bombs, against Syrian civilians and violate the norms of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights instruments. Those actions confirm beyond any doubt that this illegitimate coalition is committing such crimes, which pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, in a deliberate and systematic manner.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. In addition to conducting an international investigation into those crimes, the Council must condemn them and take immediate action to stop them and prevent their recurrence. Moreover, the Security Council must put an end to the hostile and illegal presence in Syrian territory of United States forces and other foreign forces and stop them from continuing to support terrorism and using terrorists and separatist militias to achieve their aims and implement their hostile schemes to undermine the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic and its territorial integrity.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations A/73/501–S/2018/973

General Assembly
Security Council

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5 November 2018
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda items 38, 55 and 74

Security Council
Seventy-third year

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Promotion and protection of human rights

Identical letters dated 30 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government and further to our earlier letter dated 11 October 2018 regarding the so-called "local council" elections of 30 October 2018 that the occupying Israeli authorities attempted to impose on Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/73/432–S/2018/911), I should like to convey to you the following information.

Conditions in the occupied Syrian Golan have deteriorated even further because the occupying Israeli authorities continue to coerce the Syrian citizens of that territory as part of their ongoing policies aimed at annexing the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Geneva Conventions concerning territories controlled by an occupying Power.

As part of their effort to resist having elections imposed on them by the occupying Israeli authorities, Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan have organized, over the past days and weeks, marches to protest against and express their rejection of the above-mentioned elections. The protests organized by Syrian citizens in response to the attempts of the occupying Israeli authorities to conduct elections by force reached their peak today, 30 October 2018. In response, the occupying Israeli authorities deployed troops to suppress the protest marches and fired toxic gas on demonstrators in the town of Majdal Shams, choking children, elderly persons and women as they resisted the occupying Israeli forces.

Such conduct by the occupying Israeli authorities is aimed at legitimizing illegal institutions that represent an occupying Power and at implementing their colonialist and racist project to Judaize the occupied Syrian Golan. This Israeli scheme is also

aimed at legalizing and perpetuating the occupation and applying "Israeli law" in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of its territory and that it will strive, by all available ways and means, to return that occupied territory to the homeland, sooner or later. It also reaffirms it supports for Syrian Arab citizens as they resist Israeli occupation and reject these illegal elections, the decision to incorporate the Syrian Arab Golan into the occupying State and all the illegal measures that have been imposed by the occupying Israeli authorities.

It wishes to stress that it is unacceptable for an occupying Power such as Israel to continue to reject and disregard all United Nations resolutions calling for it to end its occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. Under those resolutions, all the actions that Israel has taken to change the legal status, demographic composition and geographical nature of the territory are considered null and void and without effect under international law.

Moreover, the Government and the people of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirm that they utterly reject and absolutely condemn this hostile and reckless action and the attacks committed by the occupying Israeli forces against innocent civilians, including children, women and elderly persons, in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic calls upon all international organizations, including the Security Council, to reject clearly these flagrant Israeli violations of international law and norms, the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), wherein the Council considers that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect.

The Syrian Arab Republic would also like to reiterate that these hostile Israeli actions and acts of provocation will increase tensions and exacerbate the situation in the occupied Golan and the region. It therefore calls upon the Security Council to take urgent action to maintain international peace and security by condemning these Israeli aggressions against Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan and by compelling Israel to respect the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations. The Council must also compel Israel to cease its illegal settlement policies and its oppressive measures against our people in the occupied Syrian Golan, stop providing any form of material and moral support to armed terrorist gangs in Syria and end its policy of contempt for international law and the international community.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 38, 55 and 74, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/974

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 30 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1031 (1995), I have the honour to transmit the fifty-fourth report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering the period from 22 April to 15 October 2018, which I received from the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Letter dated 17 October 2018 from the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1031 (1995) of 15 December 1995, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council reports from the High Representative on the implementation of the Agreement, in accordance with annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conclusions of the London Peace Implementation Conference of 8 and 9 December 1995, I transmit herewith the fifty-fourth report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would ask that the report be distributed to the members of the Council for their consideration.

This is my twentieth regular report to the Secretary-General since assuming the post of High Representative and European Union Special Representative on 26 March 2009. The present report covers the period from 22 April to 15 October 2018.

Should you or a member of the Security Council require any information beyond what is provided in the report or have any questions regarding its contents, I would be pleased to provide you with that information.

(*Signed*) Valentin **Inzko**

Fifty-fourth report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina

Summary

The present report covers the period from 22 April to 15 October 2018. Over the last six months, the run-up to the general elections on 7 October amplified the negative trends noted in my previous report and defined the overall political dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was reflected in continued stagnation in the pace of reform at all levels and, in particular, in a new level of divisive and provocative rhetoric from some senior political figures. The significant increase in migrants seeking to transit to the European Union through Bosnia and Herzegovina this year has further tested the State's limited resources and revealed reluctance by certain lower levels of the government to assist the State level in the implementation of its competencies.

The country's aspirations for European Union integration remained firmly on the agenda despite the difficult political environment, and it is noteworthy that, following the submission of initial answers to the European Commission questionnaire during the previous reporting period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities are working on answers to some 650 follow-up questions received in June. A rare piece of good news in the rule of law sector came in September, when after several months of disagreement, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly, with the assistance of the wider international community, finally adopted long-outstanding amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a compromise agreement acceptable to nearly all political parties.

On 7 October 2018, citizens voted in the eighth general election held in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, selecting representatives to the State, entity and cantonal levels. The elections were held without any major security incidents and were described as "genuinely competitive" by international observers. However, international and local stakeholders raised concerns about the ethnically divisive nature of the campaign and a number of reported irregularities, including financial threats and incentives to voters,[a] problems with polling station committees, inflated voter rolls, problems with the count and a high number of invalid ballots, reported at over half a million by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite clear recommendations from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on legislative and other changes to improve the integrity of the election process, the parties did not institute these improvements ahead of the elections. The Central Election Commission is currently working to complete the counting proce nd to process election-related complaints, including several requests for recounts, and official certified results are expected by 6 November. While preliminary results for State, entity and cantonal parliaments are available, much of their significance will depend on the process of coalition-building and government formation yet to come.

The fact that the parties failed to agree on electoral reform in the wake of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court's decision in the "Ljubić case", related to the indirect election of delegates to the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, could further complicate the formation of authorities. It is also worth mentioning that prior to the election officials of the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina) party and others warned that if Željko Komšić were elected as the Croat member of the Presidency it could trigger a "crisis",[b] and that Komšić appears to have been elected.

In August, the Republika Srpska government repealed the Republika Srpska government report on Srebrenica of 2004, in which it had officially acknowledged the involvement of Republika Srpska military and police forces in the events of July 1995 in Srebrenica. The report of 2004 had not only been required for the enforcement of a final and binding decision of the Human Rights Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but was also a crucial step towards reconciliation, based on the concept of individual rather than collective guilt. The decision of the Republika Srpska government to reject this approach highlights the extent to which the reconciliation process has deteriorated over the last several years.

I must again draw attention to an increase in divisive and destabilizing rhetoric from a number of political representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the continuation of statements by the President of the Republika Srpska denying the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina,[c] while advocating the secession of the Republika Srpska and a union with Serbia.[d] Although the international media reported in September that he had refrained from secessionist rhetoric in the run-up to the elections, he again threatened the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in an interview published in the final days of the campaign period.[e]

In this context, under the authority vested in me under annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, I reiterate that the entities have no right to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the Framework Agreement guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the internal constitutional position of the entities.

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[a] "These days pensioners will receive a one-time assistance to go to the polls and vote for us. If by chance you do not vote, we will take the money back. Whoever does not want to vote for us does not get a raise." President of the Republika Srpska and SNSD President, Milorad Dodik, at a campaign event in Ugljevik, *BNTV*, 18 September 2018. "Whoever is employed in Gacko, do not by chance vote for Govedarica and the SDS. We will fire you. And I ask you, whoever you see vote and do that, just let me know. I will throw him out, you won't have to." Milorad Dodik in Gacko, *Oslobodjenje/ReStart Srpska*, 22 September 2018.

[b] "[The election of Komšić] could trigger a crisis of unforeseeable proportions for the State of [Bosnia and Herzegovina]. It would entail a lot of problems in the functioning of all levels of government ..." Member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency and HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina President, Dragan Čović, *Klix.ba*, 20 September 2018.

[c] "[Bosnia and Herzegovina] has been patched together. It is not a State. It only has international recognition." Milorad Dodik, lecture at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade, *Tanjug/Face TV*, 30 May 2018.

[d] "This is a historic moment in which we need to define our overall policy of a single national, but also administrative area. This means ... Why should we not talk about it? All other peoples are allowed to talk. Muslims are talking about their own State. Albanians are talking about their State. Croats have already solved their statehood issue. Serbs are the only ones denied the right to talk about a State. Well, I want to talk. I think that Serbia and the [Republika Srpska] will one day be, in the future, a single State." Milorad Dodik, "Circilica" interview, *TV Happy*, 16 July 2018.

[e] "From now on, [Bosnia and Herzegovina] will face two options: existing as the Dayton structure with competencies guaranteed for the entities or going irreversibly towards a peaceful dissolution." Milorad Dodik, *EuroBlic*, 5 October 2018. "And a whole generation of people who so selflessly invested all of their ideas, wishes, and even lives in the foundations of the [Republika Srpska], they mustn't be betrayed. Nor can our first leaders be betrayed, from Mr. Karadžić who, with the galaxy of people he led, believed that it should be built as an independent country, because that is the pledge of our freedom". Milorad Dodik, *RTRS*, 5 October 2018.

I. Introduction

1. This is my twentieth regular report to the United Nations Secretary-General since assuming the post of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2009. It provides a narrative of progress made towards attaining goals outlined in previous reports, registers factual developments, logs relevant citations and provides my impartial assessment of the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in key areas within my mandate. I have focused on addressing those areas in line with my responsibility to uphold the civilian aspects of the Framework Agreement. I have thus continued to encourage the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to make progress on the five objectives and two conditions necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative and have worked to preserve measures previously undertaken to implement the Framework Agreement.

2. I continue to focus on fulfilling my mandate in accordance with annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace and relevant Security Council resolutions. In addition, my Office fully supports the efforts by the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in moving towards closer integration with those organizations.

II. Political update

A. General political environment

3. Since the beginning of the reporting period, political parties and their officials have been operating in pre-election campaign mode, focused primarily on criticizing each other or the international community and grandstanding on divisive nationalist issues, rather than governing effectively and adopting necessary reforms.

4. The main Croat party, the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the main Bosniak party, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), which are formally partners in the State-level and Federation ruling coalitions, remained at odds over amendments to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Law. The lack of stable coalitions at both the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Federation levels resulted in low legislative output.

5. In the capital of the Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, protesters have been holding daily demonstrations over what activists allege is a cover-up by the authorities in the case of the suspicious death of a young student in March. In response, the ruling coalition of the Republika Srpska has accused opposition parties of agitating the demonstrators, in league with elements of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 5 October, two days before the elections, tens of thousands of citizens gathered in Banja Luka to support the father of the student in his search for the truth.

6. In September, the Government of the United States of America sanctioned the delegate of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) in the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives and SNSD Vice-President, Nikola Špirić, because of "his involvement in significant corruption". It is regrettable that the judicial and police authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not proven so far to be effective in tackling corruption at senior levels.

7. The deterioration in the rule of law is also reflected in the fact that authorities at all levels continue to disregard or reject binding decisions of the judiciary. This was evidenced in the failure mainly of the Federation-based parties to exert sincere efforts to reach a political agreement to resolve the issues stemming from the Bosnia

and Herzegovina Constitutional Court's decision in the "Ljubić case", which is discussed further in the present report. Local elections have not been held in the city of Mostar since 2008 owing to another unaddressed decision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court. The Republika Srpska continues to refuse to adhere to judgments of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court and the Bosnia and Herzegovina State Court concerning the registration of defence property.

8. The outstanding obligation of a number of cantons in the Federation to amend their constitutions to harmonize them with the entity constitution and to ensure the full equality of Serbs as a constituent people is another area in which I continue to urge local authorities to uphold the rule of law. In May, the Federation Constitutional Court issued a new decision requiring three cantons to amend their constitutions accordingly.

9. In the light of the general elections being held in 2018, I must call attention to the authorities' ongoing failure to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in *Sejdić and Finci* and related cases, leaving in place discriminatory provisions in violation of the fundamental right of certain categories of citizens to stand for public office.

Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the "Ljubić case" and the general elections

10. As reported previously, following the decision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court of July 2017 repealing provisions of the Election Law related to indirect elections to the Federation House of Peoples, parties have sought to address this issue.

11. Although the European Union and the United States Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina have facilitated talks between political parties, with support from the Office of the High Representative, the parties' positions have not moved substantially since negotiations began in October 2017. The Sarajevo-based parties continue to interpret the decision in the "Ljubić case" as requiring that the electoral rules be brought into conformity with the principles contained in the Federation Constitution (which were not formally addressed by the Court), in particular the rule that requires each canton to elect at least one delegate from each constituent people if there is such a delegate in its assembly and the rule that until annex 7 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace is implemented, 1991 census figures should apply for calculations requiring demographic data. The Croat parties (mainly HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina) continued to advocate that their delegates be elected in a manner that gives them "legitimate representation", that is, representation primarily from those cantons where Croats constitute a majority.

12. Starting in June, a group of parties in the Federation has sought to address this issue through a proposed law at the Federation level, while Croat representatives have rejected this approach. The Federation House of Representatives adopted the proposal in June, but machinations in the Federation House of Peoples saw disputes over quorum, rules governing the vital national interest procedure and attempts to remove a deputy speaker. Although still in process, the law is unlikely to be adopted without a political agreement.

13. As reported previously, this issue is further complicated by a request submitted in January 2018 by the then Chair of the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives, Borjana Kristo (HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina), challenging a provision of the Federation Constitution related to one of the principles concerning the composition and selection of delegates of the Federation House of Peoples, according to which, in the House of Peoples there shall be at least one Bosniak, one Croat and one Serb from each canton that has at least one such delegate in its

legislative body. As at the time of writing this report, it remains to be seen when the Court will continue to deliberate and decide on the case.

14. The absence of provisions regulating the election of delegates to the Federation House of Peoples could complicate the process of government formation following the general elections on 7 October. The process of forming legislative and executive authorities at the State, entity and cantonal levels is a combination of direct and indirect elections beginning at the cantonal level. The formation of the upper chambers of State and entity parliaments depends on the prior election of Federation House of Peoples delegates by cantonal assemblies, whereas the election of the Federation President and Vice-Presidents and the Federation government depends on the ability of both houses of the Federation Parliament to meet.

15. My office continues to closely follow developments regarding the implementation of the "Ljubić case" decision and its potential impact on the process of government formation after the general elections in 2018.

Increase in migrant arrivals

16. Since the beginning of 2018, the number of refugee and migrant arrivals detected in Bosnia and Herzegovina has risen dramatically, reaching almost 18,000 as at October, in comparison with 758 in 2017. While most have attested that they wish to seek asylum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, less than 7 per cent have managed to do so, both because of difficulties in applying and because many wish to transit on to the European Union. As at 11 October, an estimated 3,000 migrants were located in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

17. Resistance to accommodating migrants persists, as most municipalities in Una-Sana Canton — which is the main destination for migrants owing to its border with Croatia — have refused proposals by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to establish shelters, and Republika Srpska authorities have taken the position that there is no capacity to accommodate migrants within that entity. Moreover, while the Bosnia and Herzegovina border police has increased patrols on the country's eastern borders with Serbia and Montenegro, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska has refused to allow police agencies from the Federation to patrol its territory.

18. As winter approaches, aid agencies warn of thousands of persons potentially without appropriate shelter, and the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities are still struggling to accommodate them because of limited resources and resistance from local authorities and communities. In May, when the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities attempted to transfer 269 migrants from Sarajevo to a designated refugee shelter in northern Mostar, Herzegovina-Neretva cantonal police stopped the convoy and ordered it to return to Sarajevo Canton. Fortunately, a potential standoff was de-escalated and the convoy eventually passed.

B. Decisions of the High Representative during the reporting period

19. Despite frequent challenges to the rule of law and the General Framework Agreement for Peace during the reporting period, I continue to refrain from using my executive powers, in accordance with the policy of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, which emphasizes "local ownership" over international decision-making.

C. Five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative

Progress on objectives

20. During the reporting period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities made limited progress towards meeting the requirements of the 5+2 agenda established by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council as necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

State and defence property

21. During the reporting period, the Office of the High Representative continued to monitor the process of registration of prospective defence property under the ownership of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to provide necessary assistance and support as required. As a reminder, the term "prospective defence property" refers to a defined list of immovable assets required by the Bosnia and Herzegovina armed forces that should be registered to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with the Agreement on Succession Issues, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Law on Defence and relevant decisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency. In addition to being one of the conditions for the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the NATO membership action plan, progress on the issue is one of the outstanding objectives requisite for the transition of the Office.

22. Unfortunately, the process remains blocked with regard to properties located in the Republika Srpska. As reported previously, in July 2016 the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court issued a final verdict confirming the right of ownership of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the prospective defence location in Han Pijesak and directing the registration of ownership rights in the relevant land records by the Republika Srpska Administration for Geodetic and Property-Related Affairs. For over two years, the competent Republika Srpska authorities have failed to enforce this final and enforceable decision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court, contrary to the principle of the rule of law.

23. With regard to the wider issue of State property, the Office of the High Representative continues to advocate the adoption of comprehensive State-level legislation based fully on the principles of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court decision of 2012 as the only acceptable and sustainable resolution of this issue. Meanwhile, the Office continues to closely monitor the adoption and implementation of all relevant property-related laws and decisions, with the aim of protecting the property interests of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to the enactment of appropriate State property legislation. This refers in particular to the implementation of the Law on the Temporary Prohibition of Disposal of Bosnia and Herzegovina State Property, violations of which represent a serious challenge to the rule of law and may produce several legal, practical and financial complications for all parties involved.

Fiscal sustainability

24. In accordance with my mandate, including my coordination responsibilities, the Office of the High Representative continued to follow, analyse and report on developments and legislative actions related to fiscal sustainability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This included monitoring and reporting to the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on the activities of the Governing Board of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Indirect Taxation Authority, in which the Office is the only international community representative, and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Fiscal Council.

25. The Governing Board of the Indirect Taxation Authority met three times during the reporting period. Inter-entity disputes dominated the session in May. In July, the Board adopted an agreement on the temporary share of road toll revenues intended for road and highway construction, despite the dissenting votes of expert board members from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers and the Federation government. However, on 27 July, the Federation government rejected the Board's decision, citing several reasons, including financial damage to the Federation, and announced legal action.

26. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Fiscal Council held two sessions. In May, the Council and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission assessed that the country's progress on the economic programme supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility remained on track and reached an agreement on the steps required to complete the second review. However, subsequent entity-level initiatives with potentially serious fiscal implications prompted the IMF Executive Board to postpone the approval of the second review and the accompanying disbursement.

27. In July, the Council unanimously adopted the Global Framework of Fiscal Balance and Policies for the Period 2019–2021, setting the overall budget of the State institutions in 2019 at BAM 966 million, an increase of 1.68 per cent or BAM 16 million compared with the previous seven years, but kept their share in indirect tax revenue in 2019 locked at the same level as in 2012, at BAM 750 million. The adopted Framework represents the basis for budget planning.

Brcko District

28. The Office of the High Representative continued to provide expert assistance to the Brcko District authorities at their request in preparing by-laws and addressing other issues to implement four key pieces of financial legislation adopted in June 2016, which aim to further integrate Brcko District with the Bosnia and Herzegovina legal system, facilitate implementation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina economic programme negotiated with IMF and empower the District with instruments for increasing fiscal transparency, fighting the grey economy and generating revenues. The Office also continued to provide expert support to the Brcko District Finance Directorate in preparing a new Law on the Budget in order to improve fiscal discipline, transparency and accountability.

29. The conduct of three members of the Croat caucus in the Brcko District Assembly indicated an abuse of quorum rules as their absence from sessions prevented decision-making in the Assembly. This was mostly evident in relation to the adoption of the budget for 2018. As holding the Assembly hostage to party interests directly affects the overall institutional stability of the District, the District authorities sought the engagement of the Supervisor and the Office of the High Representative in identifying an appropriate solution.

Entrenching the rule of law

30. My office continues to provide support and assistance to the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in implementing the Bosnia and Herzegovina Law on Foreigners of 2015 and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Law on Asylum of 2016.

D. Challenges to the General Framework Agreement for Peace

Challenges to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina

31. As noted previously, during the reporting period, statements continued to be made, challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, again the most frequent exponent of such proclamations. [1] Delegate of the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples and Croat National Assembly Main Council President, Božo Ljubić, also speculated about the dissolution of the country if electoral reform issues were not resolved.[2]

Rhetoric on war crimes

32. The arrests on 27 April of the former Commander of the Fifth Corps of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Atif Dudaković, and other former Army personnel under suspicion of crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilians during the war of 1992–1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina prompted statements by senior Bosniak officials accusing the Bosnia and Herzegovina judiciary of attempting to "equalize" the ethnic balance of committed war crimes. Subsequently, rallies of support for Dudaković were organized in several towns in the Federation.

33. Meanwhile, some Republika Srpska politicians continue to glorify convicted war criminals. In September, the President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, publicly extolled convicted war criminals Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić,[3] and at a campaign rally, the President of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and

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[1] "[Bosnia and Herzegovina] costs us terribly and it is not in the interest of or of use to the Serb people, not now or in the long term … I am for a politics of tolerance and waiting for the moment of our final decision about uniting with Serbia." President of the Republika Srpska and SNSD President, Milorad Dodik, *RTRS*, "Predsjednik govori", 1 September 2018. "I think that [Bosnia and Herzegovina] will not survive and that a tacit, quiet separation will occur." Milorad Dodik, *Blic*, 12 August 2018. "We Serbs need to exclusively build up our two states, Republika Srpska and Serbia, and no kind of Yugoslavia, and at the same time, I — as the President of the Republic will not create for you another historical illusion called [Bosnia and Herzegovina]." Milorad Dodik, Modriča, *SRNA news agency*, 24 June 2018. "We must not hesitate to say that one of the things we must achieve is state unity of [Republika Srpska] and Serbia. That is the Serb national idea of this century." Milorad Dodik, Banja Luka, *SRNA news agency*, 22 May 2018.

[2] "The Election Law and decision of the [Bosnia and Herzegovina] Constitutional Court cannot be implemented at any level other than [the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly]. I'm sorry that people in [Bosnia and Herzegovina] and the main stakeholders don't understand that. I cannot interpret that as anything other than absurd, meaningless and cannot find any logic in it except that logic which claims that persevering in the absurd is a way to arrive at its end. I am afraid of that end, you know. I am afraid that it would mean the dissolution of [Bosnia and Herzegovina], because I know that it couldn't be carried out peacefully." Delegate of the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples and Croat National Assembly Main Council President, Božo Ljubić, *N1*, 27 June 2018.

[3] "A high degree of formal autonomy [for the Republika Srpska], obtained through the Dayton Peace Agreement, was the result of the struggle of our people, who, in 1992, under the leadership of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, fought for the freedom of the Serb people and an independent State in this region. The Dayton Agreement was a compromise in which the Serbs agreed to enter a quasi-Bosnia and Herzegovina … we on the territory of the [Republika Srpska] dared to start creating a State and we are creating it today." Milorad Dodik, at the opening of "Days of the [Republika Srpska] in Serbia", *Danas.rs/Faktor*, 5 September 2018.

candidate for President of the Republika Srpska, Vukota Govedarica, told supporters that as the President of the Republika Srpska he would model himself after Karadžić.[4]

34. Most egregiously, senior political figures continue to deny and belittle the genocide committed in Srebrenica, which has been confirmed by two international tribunals, and to insult the victims with outrageous conspiracy theories.[5]

35. It is disturbing that after more than two decades since the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended, senior political figures and certain segments of society have failed to come to grips with the war crimes that their former leaders committed and continue to deny judgments of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Such attitudes greatly hinder the prospects for lasting reconciliation in the country.

Issue of foreign fighters

36. During the reporting period, the relevant Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities did not report new departures of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Syrian Arab Republic or Iraq. The Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities report that approximately 50 citizens have returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Syrian Arab Republic or Iraq. According to the latest information, in July 2018 the Bosnia and Herzegovina State Court issued a new judgment against individuals for attempting to join Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which makes a total of 24 judgments against individuals, of whom approximately 13 have already completed their sentences.

Radical extremism and potential terrorist threats

37. In September 2018, acting on a warrant issued by the Office of the Prosecutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the State Investigation and Protection Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry for Internal Affairs of Tuzla Canton, arrested a person in the area of Gradačac (near Tuzla, in the Federation) on suspicion of organizing a terrorist group and illegally forming and joining foreign paramilitary or parapolice formations. During a search of the premises, the Agency seized a quantity of military equipment and other evidence.

III. State-level institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina

A. Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency

38. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency met monthly during the reporting period, holding five regular sessions, and focused mainly on activities relating to the European Union integration process and on addressing the increased flow of migrants into Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniak member of the Presidency, Bakir Izetbegović, chaired the Presidency during the reporting period.

[4] "After our gathering tonight, I would like to ask Sonja and Ljilja (daughter and wife of wartime [Republika Srpska] leader Radovan Karadžić), next time they speak to their father and husband and our first president, to give him my regards and tell him that the future [Republika Srpska] President will resemble him and not the one who is currently leading the [Republika Srpska]." SDS President and candidate for President of the Republika Srpska, Vukota Govedarica, *dnevnik.ba*, 18 September 2018.

[5] "Bosniaks planned the genocide so that the [United States] would bomb Serbs." Milorad Dodik, Republika Srpska National Assembly session on the repeal of the Srebrenica report of 2004, 14 August 2018. "Srebrenica is a fictitious global policy of the United States and NATO." Milorad Dodik at a campaign event in Srebrenica, *Dnevni Avaz*, 25 September 2018.

39. The Presidency collectively met with the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, while individual members visited neighbouring States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and the State of Palestine. In May, the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, visited Bosnia and Herzegovina and met with the Presidency Chair, Bakir Izetbegović, and several members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers.

40. While the Presidency was able to hold regular sessions in a cooperative atmosphere, there was also public divergence among the members on a number of issues, including the construction by neighbouring Croatia of the Pelješac Bridge, which will span the Bay of Neum, the only coastal territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On two occasions, in April and July, Mr. Izetbegović stated his emphatic opposition to the bridge and claimed that it would block the access of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the open sea, while the Croat member of the Presidency, Dragan Čović, supported the construction.

41. In August, the Presidency members disagreed publicly over the text of the letter of condolence that Mr. Izetbegović sent following the death of the former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in which he stated that Annan had recognized the mistakes of the United Nations that had led to the Srebrenica genocide. The other two members issued a public statement distancing themselves from the letter, stating that it contained "unacceptable political qualifications".

B. Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

42. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina met regularly, holding 16 regular and 2 urgent sessions. However, the absence of stable parliamentary majority support significantly hindered its work, limiting the number of legislative proposals it sent to the Parliament for consideration.

43. The main priorities of the Council of Ministers remained European Union-related issues and activities aimed at addressing the migrant crisis. In June, the Council of Ministers received 655 follow-up questions to the European Commission questionnaire and distributed them to appropriate working groups, which did not finalize responses within the three-month deadline. With regard to the migrant crisis, the Council of Ministers coordinated activities to strengthen the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, improve cooperation with neighbouring States and provide assistance for migrant registration and accommodation.

44. In August, the Council of Ministers adopted the Bosnia and Herzegovina Framework Energy Strategy, which provides guidelines for the development of the energy sector until 2035.

45. On the international front, the Council of Ministers participated in the Western Balkans Summit within the Berlin Process, held in London in July, and secured EUR 275 million in support for its projects. Two grants for Bosnia and Herzegovina worth EUR 43 million were also approved.

46. Without assured support in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament, the Council of Ministers adopted only two sets of amendments to existing laws. It also adopted the framework budget for the Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions for 2019–2021, setting the budget at BAM 966 million for 2019 and BAM 957 million for 2020 and 2021.

C. Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly

47. Throughout the period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly lacked a stable majority to secure support for legislation in both chambers. In May, a delegate in the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples who was formerly part of the governing majority merged his new party with opposition party the Democratic People's Alliance (DNS), ending the already fragile majority that had endured through most of the current mandate.

48. Although a parliamentary majority coalition comprising SDA, the Union for a Better Future (SBB), HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska "Alliance for Change" parties SDS, Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) and the National Democratic Party (NDP) continued to formally exist, it did so without support from additional delegates to guarantee the adoption of legislative proposals, most of which were proposed by individual delegates rather than the Council of Ministers.

49. Nonetheless, a breakthrough was achieved in September with the adoption of long-needed amendments to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Criminal Procedure Code, when, after months of quarrelling, a compromise proposal was agreed upon and adopted in both chambers.

50. The Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives held four regular and two urgent sessions and the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples held five regular sessions. In addition to important amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly adopted two proposals in the form of amendments to existing laws and rejected seven proposals (all amendments to existing laws).

IV. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Federation coalition developments

51. The Federation government worked consistently throughout the reporting period, holding 19 regular and 9 extraordinary sessions, while adopting 26 new laws and nine sets of amendments to existing legislation. With continued political disputes and pressure from frequently protesting war veterans, the Federation Parliament delivered only one new law and four sets of amendments to existing legislation.

52. The low legislative output reflected the stagnation in the Federation Parliament, with the House of Representatives holding just one regular session, one thematic session and four extraordinary sessions and the House of Peoples holding only two regular and two extraordinary sessions.

No agreement to enable local elections in Mostar

53. The responsible political parties could not reach an agreement to enact amendments to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Law that would enable the holding of local elections in the city of Mostar, where there have been no local elections since 2008. Although the Mostar city board of nine parliamentary parties (SDA, HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina, HDZ 1990, Social Democratic Party (SDP), SBB, Democratic Front (DF), Bosnian-Herzegovinian Patriotic Party (BPS), SNSD and SDS) met nine times from February to June on this issue and found agreement on some areas, they failed to reach a final agreement and held no further talks. I continue to urge the parties to find a compromise to enable the citizens of Mostar to enjoy the same democratic right to elect their local leaders as that enjoyed by the citizens in the rest of the country.

Constitutional status of Serbs in the cantons

54. In May, the Federation Constitutional Court decided that several provisions of the constitutions of Posavina, Herzegovina-Neretva and West Herzegovina Cantons do not conform with the Federation Constitution and ordered the assemblies of those cantons to amend their respective constitutions accordingly, in particular with respect to ensuring the full equality of Serbs as a constituent people and of the Serbian and Bosnian languages and providing for the use of the Cyrillic script. In September, the State-level Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court rejected as inadmissible a similar complaint against five cantonal constitutions on jurisdictional grounds, considering that the issue falls under the jurisdiction of the Federation Constitutional Court.

55. The High Representative's decision of 2002, enacting amendments to the Federation Constitution within the wider implementation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court's decision on the equality of the constituent peoples, determined that all three constituent peoples are equal in the Federation, that the official languages of the Federation are Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, and that the official scripts are Latin and Cyrillic. Cantons remain obliged to harmonize their constitutions with the Federation Constitution.

56. .I have repeatedly called upon the cantonal authorities to harmonize their constitutions with the Federation Constitution and publicly urged the cantonal assemblies to implement the Federation Constitutional Court's judgment without further delay.

War veteran protests

57. In May, several hundred veterans protested in front of the Federation Parliament on the occasion of a thematic session of the Federation House of Representatives on the status of war veterans and the protection of war invalids. The House concluded with a call on the Federation Ministry for Veteran and Invalid Affairs to submit the Law on the Rights of War Veterans and Their Family Members to address the issues of a single registry of veterans and veteran allowances, and decided to consider the Law on Veterans' Associations as a matter of significant social importance. In July, both houses of the Federation Parliament adopted the Law on the Rights of War Veterans and Their Family Members, but in different texts, requiring the joint parliamentary commission to harmonize them, which it failed to do in three consecutive attempts. As a result, in September several hundred veterans again protested, attempting to block traffic in the centre of Sarajevo, leading to clashes with police. Four police officers were injured and two protesters were arrested, one of whom subsequently died in custody.

V. Republika Srpska

58. During the reporting period, the Republika Srpska ruling coalition, led by the SNSD in partnership with the Democratic People's Alliance (DNS) and the Socialist Party (SPRS), remained functional, and the Republika Srpska government met regularly. According to available information, the Republika Srpska National Assembly held one regular and five special sessions, adopting 18 new laws and 19 sets of amendments to existing laws.

59. The period was marked by an intensified power struggle between the ruling coalition and the opposition, increased pressure on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media and a surge in nationalistic rhetoric.

60. The power struggle between the ruling coalition and the opposition intensified ahead of the general elections in 2018, with the ruling coalition accusing the opposition of betraying entity interests, and the opposition accusing the ruling coalition of corruption and nepotism.

61. Grass-roots civic protests have also emerged in Banja Luka, lasting more than six months, as protesters demand that Republika Srpska law enforcement agencies investigate the mysterious death of a 21-year-old student and bring the perpetrators to justice. Despite attempts by the authorities to portray the protests as anti-government, accusing opposition parties and the international community of agitating the situation, the case has highlighted discontent among citizens and their loss of trust in public institutions, in particular the police and the judiciary.

62. The period was also marked by pressure on, intimidation of and attacks against those who criticize the ruling coalition, of which the government's announced intention to pass new legislation aimed at limiting the work of NGOs is a clear example. In June, SNSD announced the proposal of the Republika Srpska Law on Foreign Donations, aimed at identifying organizations that receive foreign funding. NGOs such as Civil Rights Defenders, Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights warned that provisions of the legislation would be unconstitutional and against the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

63. In August, a journalist reporting for BN Television, an independent broadcaster critical of the Republika Srpska government, was severely beaten by two perpetrators in Banja Luka. The journalist's injuries were severe enough for the Banja Luka Prosecutor's Office to assess the assault as attempted murder. Republika Srpska police arrested one suspect in September and subsequently issued a warrant for the second suspect. Media reports allege links between at least one of the suspects and ruling party circles.

64. After continuously denying and demeaning the Srebrenica genocide, in July the President of the Republika Srpska launched an initiative to repeal the Republika Srpska government report on Srebrenica of 2004, which the government ultimately did in August, with a supporting vote by the Republika Srpska National Assembly. The Republika Srpska government report of 2004 was the only formal acknowledgement to date by Republika Srpska officials of the involvement of Republika Srpska military and police forces in the events of July 1995 in Srebrenica, and its repeal undoes years of work towards reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

65. As the October elections neared, the President of the Republika Srpska appeared to employ scare tactics as part of his campaign, threatening to take back the Republika Srpska government's one-time assistance payment from pensioners who did not vote for SNSD. He also openly said that those in the Gacko municipality who supported the opposition would lose their jobs and called on citizens to report anyone who voted against SNSD.

Non-cooperation with the High Representative

66. The Republika Srpska government continues to deny my Office access to official information and documents, as required under annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace. Under article IX of annex 10, all authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are obliged to fully cooperate with the High Representative. Repeated calls by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, reminding the Republika Srpska authorities of their obligations in this regard, have had no impact. The practice of the Republika Srpska government of not providing information and documents requested by the Office of the High Representative dates

from 2007 and contradicts frequent claims by the Republika Srpska that the entity respects the letter of the Framework Agreement.

VI. Entrenching the rule of law

Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina

67. I reported previously on a decision by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court of June 2017, in which several provisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Criminal Procedure Code regulating special investigative measures in criminal proceedings were declared unconstitutional. When the deadline of six months for the implementation of the ruling passed with no progress, the Court was poised to delete those provisions from the law, which would bring to a halt the majority of criminal cases handled by the Office of the Prosecutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court. I warned of the risk to the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina if the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly failed to adopt appropriate new amendments in line with international standards to address this issue.

68. I am pleased to report that in September, both houses of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted the necessary amendments to the law, in line with international standards, although SNSD representatives in the House of Representatives did not attend the session.

69. Over the past several months, SDA and HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina each proposed sets of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code. The Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives adopted the SDA amendments, which were deemed consistent with international standards in the fight against corruption, while in the House of Peoples, SNSD and DNS delegates sided with the Croat caucus to oppose them and support the HDZ Bosnia and Herzegovina amendments, which would have significantly limited the State's ability to exercise its criminal jurisdiction. However, late in the reporting period, most of the parties responded to growing concerns about criminal processes in the country by responsibly reaching an agreement and passing the required amendments without endangering the possibility of the full exercise of State-level jurisdiction in criminal matters. The engagement of the international community, including my Office, on this issue was key to this achievement.

70. In June 2017 the Constitutional Court did not decide on the entire request for the review of constitutionality of the Criminal Procedure Code. It left the provisions on physical examination of the accused and other persons and therefore put that part of the request on the agenda of its plenary session of 27 September, but postponed adopting any decision.

Entity anti-corruption efforts

71. The specific legislation in the Federation on a special prosecutor and court department for fighting corruption and organized crime, which was passed in 2014, remains unimplemented.

War crimes cases

72. In April, the Bosnia and Herzegovina State Investigation and Protection Agency arrested a former Commander of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Atif Dudaković, along with 12 other former Army members, on the basis of a charge by the Office of the Prosecutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina of crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilians, for their alleged involvement in

the killing of several hundred Serb and other civilians. All were released from detention the following day, with measures prohibiting them from communicating with each other or the media.

73. In June, the Appellate Panel of Section I for War Crimes of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court revoked the Court's first instance acquittal of October 2017 of the wartime Commander of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina forces in Srebrenica, Naser Orić, and fellow Army member, Sabahudin Muhić, and ordered a retrial. The Court had acquitted the two of charges of war crimes against prisoners of war. The retrial began in September.

VII. Public security and law enforcement, including intelligence reform

74. Unfortunately, the long-standing practice of improper political interference in operational policing has not diminished.

75. In Posavina Canton, cantonal authorities have yet to heed my written guidance to remedy damaging changes to police legislation. One change deleted a provision required by a letter from the President of the Security Council of 2007 on police denied certification by the former United Nations International Police Task Force. I will follow this development and report on whether Bosnia and Herzegovina is in overall compliance with the Security Council directive. Another provision creates the possibility for former police who enter politics to later return to police service, which represents direct improper political influence.

76. The Una-Sana Canton government has not met its legal obligations in the selection and appointment of a new Police Commissioner and the process remains stalled. The mandate of the Police Commissioner of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton expired on 30 September, but the selection of a new Police Commissioner has not begun, owing to the absence of a functioning Independent Board since March 2017. The Sarajevo Canton Independent Board is showing worrying signs of exceeding its authority and interfering with professional policing. In September, the Brcko District Independent Board launched a selection procedure for a new Chief of Police of Brcko District.

77. In September, the Tuzla Canton Assembly adopted new provisions in its police legislation that should facilitate the implementation of a separate police budget, and the Zenica-Doboj Canton Assembly adopted a new Law on Internal Affairs allowing for a separate police budget.

78. In August, the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Assembly deleted a damaging provision from its Law on Police Officials that would have allowed politicians to return to police service, and in September, the Sarajevo Canton Assembly adopted a new Law on Police Officials that, inter alia, excludes this possibility.

79. In July, the Canton 10 Assembly adopted amendments to the Law on Police Officials, which, inter alia, allow for the employment of police officials from other police bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Public security during the influx of migrants

80. In Una-Sana Canton, on the border with Croatia, where the majority of the migrants are concentrated owing to their demonstrated pattern of attempting to enter the European Union, police authorities have expressed increasing concern over the worsening public security situation. To date, police authorities have recorded the arrival of 10,000 migrants in Una-Sana Canton and estimate that between 2,000 and

2,500 migrants still reside there. Police authorities also reported 47 felonies and 17 violations of public order connected to the influx of migrants.

VIII. Economy

81. The economic performance of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the reporting period was generally positive. In September, the Directorate for Economic Planning of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers noted an economic growth rate of 2 per cent in the first quarter of 2018. Compared with the same period in 2017, exports, imports and industrial production increased by 11.8, 9.1 and 3.4 per cent, respectively. Inflation stood at 1.2 per cent. The administrative unemployment rate fell by 3.7 per cent to an estimated 35.7 per cent, while the real unemployment rate, calculated on the basis of the Labour Force Survey of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Statistics Agency, is 18.4 per cent. The total number of registered employees as at the end of June had increased by 7.8 per cent over the same period in 2017.

82. The credit and business ratings of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain the same. In its report in September, Standard & Poor's Ratings Services affirmed the credit rating of Bosnia and Herzegovina at "B", with a stable outlook. The banking sector is assessed as generally stable and liquid. According to Bosnia and Herzegovina Central Bank data, 23 commercial banks in Bosnia and Herzegovina registered a record profit in 2017, totalling BAM 344.35 million, a 57.5 per cent increase over 2016. Foreign direct investments totalled BAM 219.7 million in the first quarter of 2018, a 28.2 per cent decrease compared with the same period in 2017.

83. Eurostat data from June place Bosnia and Herzegovina as the second poorest country in Europe. Citizen purchasing capacity is estimated at 32 per cent of the European Union average. The average net salary in June was BAM 872 (EUR 436), a 2.5 per cent increase compared with June 2017, while the average pension in July was BAM 387 (EUR 194), a 7.7 per cent increase compared with July 2017. Minimum pensions were BAM 187.80 (EUR 94) in the Republika Srpska and BAM 348.10 (EUR 174) in the Federation.

84. The overall political and social environment is the most frequently cited reason for emigration. According to the Union for Sustainable Return and Integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 169,000 people have emigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last five years.

Fiscal issues

85. There were no delays in debt servicing and regular monthly payments in the reporting period, owing primarily to the continued growth of indirect tax revenue, but also to continued borrowing. IMF released no funds to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the reporting period.

86. The budget of the State institutions has been locked at the same level since 2012, and the State's share in indirect tax revenue has also been locked for the last six years, while the State's revenues from other sources — which should fill the gap — have continued to decline. Consequently, funds available to the State institutions allow them to cover basic current expenditures but are insufficient to allow for their full functioning and fulfilment of their obligations, including those related to integration processes. The Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (including the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the State-level security sector in general are among those most affected.

87. The Federation maintained budget stability during the reporting period, as reflected in the consolidated budget execution report for January to June 2018.

However, renewed demands from war veterans for new legislation that would increase the transparency and efficiency of budget spending for war veterans and also regulate their entitlements could have a serious impact on budget stability.

88. The Republika Srpska continues to finance almost one quarter of its regular budgetary needs through borrowing. Under the revised Republika Srpska budget plan for 2018, adopted in May, the Republika Srpska government planned BAM 540 million in long-term borrowing from various sources (IMF, the World Bank, local commercial banks and bond issuance on international capital markets) in 2018. In June, the Republika Srpska government increased pensions by 2.5 per cent, bringing the cumulative increase in the Republika Srpska over the last five years to 20 per cent. In August, the Republika Srpska government approved a one-time assistance payment to pensioners of BAM 30 to BAM 100, depending on the pension amount, just ahead of the general elections. In July, the Republika Srpska National Assembly amended the labour tax legislation, increasing wages in the public sector by between 9 and 12 per cent. The amendments also increased the amount of the tax-free minimum wage in the private sector.

89. A functional indirect tax system is key to budget stability at all levels of government and the single indirect tax system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is rightfully considered to be one of the most crucial post-Dayton reforms. Nevertheless, the system has faced political challenges and attempts to weaken its institutional structure. Recently, the system was jeopardized by attempts at enforcing a Bosnia and Herzegovina Court decision of 2015 against the Indirect Taxation Authority by going after accounts maintained on behalf of the State, the entities and Brcko District. In addition to raising questions about its compliance with the relevant legislation, the manner of enforcement resulted in a serious shortfall of funds intended for financing all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ultimate risk is a loss of trust in the indirect tax system, which may serve as a pretext for further political challenges.

90. In September the Bosnia and Herzegovina Court suspended enforcement of the Court decision of 2015 until 3 December at the latest, pending its decision on the Indirect Taxation Authority proposal to enforce the debt through the State-level budget, in line with relevant regulations on the enforcement of executive court decisions, or on another proposal of the creditor.

International obligations

91. In August, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a Bosnia and Herzegovina Framework Energy Strategy, which provides guidelines for the development of the energy sector until 2035. The Strategy was prepared on the basis of the relevant entity strategies and is the result of a coordinated effort. Its adoption, which has been pending for almost a decade, will unlock international financial assistance to the energy sector and set the path for further reforms.

92. The adoption of the Energy Strategy is not enough, however, for the Energy Community to lift the sanctions against Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were introduced in October 2015 in response to the country's persistent failure to meet its obligations under the Treaty establishing the Energy Community. In that regard, the Director of the Energy Community secretariat welcomed the adoption of the Strategy, but reminded Bosnia and Herzegovina of its obligation to also adopt State-level laws on the electricity market and on gas.

93. *Serious concerns were also raised in the energy sector in connection with a* development related to the State-level Bosnia and Herzegovina Electricity Transmission Company (TRANSCO), which was established to ensure a continuous electricity supply through transmission grid management and to facilitate the creation

of a single electricity market in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as its integration into regional energy markets. Despite its success in accomplishing those objectives, TRANSCO has faced numerous challenges, the most pressing of which include a legal claim against it by the Mostar-based power company, which concerns investments in electricity transmission assets and liabilities prior to their transfer to TRANSCO in 2006. If successful, the claim will have serious financial implications for the company and may open the door to challenging the entities' shares in TRANSCO, as well as to challenging other similarly established State-level institutions. Further risks to TRANSCO stem from disputes over management appointments and their impact on the company's decision-making, which could provide a pretext for challenges to its sustainability as a State-level company.

94. Financial cutbacks to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Railways Corporation, introduced unilaterally by the Republika Srpska, have continued for the second consecutive year and threaten to destabilize the only corporation established thus far under annex 9 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, and one that is crucial for the proper coordination and harmonization of the railway sector. The cutbacks coincided with the entity government's conclusion of March 2017 requesting the Republika Srpska Ministry of Transport and Communications to initiate a review of the agreement between the Federation and the Republika Srpska on the establishment of a joint public railway corporation as part of the transportation corporation, concluded in 1998 under annex 9 to the Framework Agreement. Both the financial issue and the ongoing review could pose a serious threat to the institution.

IX. Return of refugees and displaced persons

95. The realization of the right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their pre-war homes remains central to the fulfilment of annex 7 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, as it requires authorities at all levels to create in their territories the political, economic and social conditions conducive to the voluntary return and harmonious reintegration of refugees and displaced persons, without preference for any particular group.

96. The Republika Srpska government repeal of the Srebrenica report of 2004 undoubtedly erodes many of the political and social conditions conducive to the return of refugees and displaced persons, not only to Srebrenica but to other Republika Srpska communities as well.

97. Education remains a contentious issue in several returnee communities. The Republika Srpska authorities continue to refuse to acknowledge the right of Bosniak returnee schoolchildren to refer to their language as "Bosnian", despite a decision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court of 2016 guaranteeing that right, opting instead for the selective application of a provision of the entity constitution referring to "the language of the Bosniak people", while referring to the language of the other two constituent peoples as "Serbian" and "Croatian".

98. At the same time, Serb returnee students in the Federation, in particular in the Croat-majority Canton 10, continue to demand the introduction of the Serbian language in their education, without success.

X. Media developments

99. There have been significant threats to media freedom during the reporting period. A serious physical assault against a journalist in Banja Luka in August highlighted the issue of journalist safety in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

100. According to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Journalists' Association and its free media helpline, from January until September 2018 there were 42 reported violations of journalists' rights, including five physical assaults and one death threat. Media professionals in Bosnia and Herzegovina have revived an earlier initiative seeking legislation to treat an assault on a journalist in the same way as an attack against a public official.

101. There has been no progress in the functioning of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Broadcasting System, and its independence is still compromised by problems in financing and management and the reluctance to implement the legal requirements for system integration. The method of collecting radio-television tax remains inconsistent between the Republika Srpska and the State and Federation broadcasters, as I have reported previously. Problems also remain in implementing legislation calling for the registration of a joint legal entity, to enable the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting and to streamline the activities of the three services.

102. Owing to the inability of the public broadcasters to act outside political influence and the lack of will among the political parties in power to allow the proper implementation of the relevant legislation, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Broadcasting System exists only on paper. This is unfortunate, as the current legislation represents a solid legal basis for a proper public broadcasting system that would serve the interests of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with generally accepted programming principles.

103. On a positive note, the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is considering introducing more consistent monitoring of current affairs programmes, including those of the three public broadcasters, which could enable the full implementation of the programming principles and restrictions, thereby reducing political influence in programming content.

XI. European Union military force

104. The European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR), with its continued executive mandate, plays a vital role in supporting the country's efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment. In that context, I am very concerned over the disproportionate purchases of long-barrelled weapons by some law enforcement agencies.

105. With that in mind, I believe monitoring weapons and ammunition stocks from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the police services is an appropriate measure to ensure better situational awareness and promote confidence-building across a highly fragmented law enforcement sector.

XII. Future of the Office of the High Representative

106. The Political Directors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council met in Sarajevo on 5 and 6 June 2018 to assess progress in implementing the General Framework Agreement for Peace and once again underlined their unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their full support to me as the High Representative in ensuring respect for the Framework Agreement and carrying out my mandate in accordance with annex 10 thereto, and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Political Directors reinforced the need to complete the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. The next meeting of the Steering Board is scheduled for December 2019 in Sarajevo.

107. My Office continues its fiscally responsible approach to budget planning, and the results are evident. Since the beginning of my mandate in March 2009, the Office's budget has been reduced by 53 per cent and my staff by over 58 per cent. Given the deep and ongoing nature of the cuts, it is important to highlight that, considering the realities of the situation on the ground and as entitled under annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, I must remain equipped with the budget and the staff required to carry out my mandate effectively.

XIII. Reporting schedule

108. In keeping with the practice of submitting regular reports for onward transmission to the Security Council, as required under Council resolution 1031 (1995), I present herewith my twentieth regular report as High Representative. I would be pleased to provide additional information at any time, should the Secretary-General or any member of the Security Council require it. The next regular report to the Secretary-General is scheduled for April 2019.

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2421 (2018), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report every three months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The report covers key developments relating to Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since my previous report, dated 9 July 2018 (S/2018/677), and the briefing to the Security Council by my Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on 8 August.

II. Summary of key political developments

A. Political situation

2. On 9 August 2018, the Independent High Electoral Commission's Board of Judges announced the provisional results of the parliamentary elections held in Iraq on 12 May. The announcement followed the completion of a partial manual recount, which led to minimal changes to the original results that were first announced by the Independent High Electoral Commission on 19 May. On 19 August, the Federal Supreme Court officially certified the election results, marking the start of the 90-day constitutional timetable for convening the Council of Representatives (the parliament) and forming the Government. In accordance with constitutional requirements, on 27 August the President of Iraq, Fuad Masum, issued a decree inviting the new Council of Representatives to convene its first session within the constitutional time frame.

3. On 3 September, the fourth Council of Representatives under the Constitution of 2005 held its inaugural session under the chairmanship of the eldest parliamentary member and interim Speaker, Mohammed Ali al-Zaini. Following a swearing-in ceremony, the new parliamentarians aimed to proceed with the formation of the largest parliamentary bloc and the election of a new Speaker and the two Deputy Speakers, in accordance with constitutional requirements. Two parliamentary blocs subsequently submitted their respective lists to the interim Speaker: the "Reform and Construction" bloc formed by Muqtada al-Sadr (Sa'iron Alliance), Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi (Nasr (Victory Alliance)), Ammar al-Hakim (National Wisdom Movement), Iyad Allawi (Wataniya Alliance) and Osama al-Nujaifi (Iraqi Decision

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Alliance); and the "Construction" bloc formed by Nouri al-Maliki (State of Law), Hadi al-Amiri (Fatah) and individual parliamentarians previously affiliated with Nasr, the Iraqi Decision Alliance, the Wataniya Alliance and other groups. With each of the two blocs claiming to be the largest and thus entitled to form the Government, there was controversy over whether individual parliamentarians could join other political parties after the ratification of the election results. Amid legal and procedural disagreements, recommendations were made to seek the advice of the Federal Supreme Court as to which of the two blocs had the largest number of seats. The interim Speaker announced that the session would resume the following day, but on 4 September, the Council failed to convene due to the lack of a quorum. After consulting with the heads of the parliamentary blocs, the interim Speaker announced that the first session would resume on 15 September.

4. The emergence of two parliamentary blocs, each claiming authority to form the Government, reflects the political fragmentation that has characterized the negotiations on government formation. The two Shia election frontrunners, Muqtada al-Sadr (Sa'iron Alliance) and Hadi al-Amiri (Fatah) have been competing to win the parliamentary majority. While the Fatah coalition reached out to Sunni and Kurdish parties to establish the "Construction" bloc, the Sa'iron Alliance consolidated the "Reform and Construction" bloc with the National Wisdom Movement, Nasr and Wataniya Alliance coalitions on 19 August. Earlier, on 14 August, prominent Sunni leaders, including Osama al-Nujaifi and Khamis al-Khanjar (Iraqi Decision Alliance), Jamal al-Karbouli (Al-Hal) and Salim al-Jubouri (Wataniya Alliance), had announced the formation of the "Mihwar al-Watani Alliance" to engage in negotiations as a single Sunni entity, but individual negotiations with the two larger blocs eventually led to the splitting of that Alliance. Divisions have also remained among the Kurdish political parties, both between the two larger parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and between those two parties and smaller opposition parties, including the Movement for Change (Gorran) and the Coalition for Democracy and Justice.

5. The first session of the Council of Representatives resumed on 15 September with the aim of electing the new Speaker and the two Deputy Speakers. By the time of voting, the list of candidates for the Speaker position had narrowed to three individuals: Mohammed al-Halbousi (Al-Hal), Khalid al-Obaidi (Nasr) and Osama al-Nujaifi (Iraqi National Decision). Securing 169 votes cast in a secret ballot, Mohammed al-Halbousi was elected the new Speaker. The posts of the First and Second Deputy Speakers went to Hassan al-Kaabi (Sa'iron Alliance) and Bashir Haddad (Kurdistan Democratic Party), respectively.

6. On 17 September, the Council of Representatives called for the candidates for the position of President of Iraq to submit their applications by 23 September, in accordance with the constitutional time frame. For the first time under the Constitution, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan did not present a common presidential candidate. The Kurdistan Democratic Party nominated Fuad Hussein, the current Chief of Staff to the President of the Kurdistan Region, while the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan nominated its former member Barham Salih. Notably, an independent female politician, Sarwa Abdul Wahid (formerly Movement for Change (Gorran)), nominated herself for the Presidency, as did many other female candidates.

7. On 2 October, the Council of Representatives held a voting session to elect the new President. Among 20 candidates, Barham Salih and Fuad Hussein received the highest number of votes, 165 and 89 respectively. Female candidate Sarwa Abdul Wahid received 18 votes. As no candidate achieved the required two-thirds majority, the new Speaker called for a second round of voting with the two leading candidates. In the second round, Barham Salih garnered the required majority with 219 votes.

Fuad Hussein obtained 22 votes. Thereafter, Barham Salih was sworn in as President of Iraq before the Council of Representatives.

8. Following his election, the President held a meeting with the new Speaker, the Chair of the Federal Supreme Court, Medhat al-Mahmoud, representatives of the "Reform and Construction" and the "Construction" parliamentary blocs and former Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi in order to discuss the nomination of the Prime Minister-designate. Upon an agreement between and the recommendation of the two largest alliances, the President appointed Adil Abdul-Mahdi as the Prime Minister-designate, charging him with forming a new Government within the 30-day constitutional timeline.

9. Demonstrations intensified over the lack of basic services in southern Iraq during the reporting period. On 20 August, owing to water contamination and the deteriorating health and environmental situation, the Independent High Commission for Human Rights called on the Government to declare Basrah a "disaster area". Street protests resumed and, though they were initially peaceful, violent incidents began occurring in early September. Incidents included clashes between the protesters and the security forces, the burning of official and political party buildings, attacks against the Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Basrah and the Basrah headquarters of the popular mobilization forces, as well as indirect fire in the vicinity of the Consulate of the United States of America in Basrah and the United States Embassy in Baghdad. On 7 September, protests were reported in Baghdad. On 25 September, a female civil activist was shot dead in Basrah. On 28 September, the United States decided to close and evacuate its Consulate in Basrah Governorate owing to security concerns.

10. Many political parties and leaders expressed grave concerns about the situation in Basrah, urging the Government to ensure the safety of the protesters and to respond to the legitimate demands of citizens. Notably, in a televised speech on 6 September, Muqtada al-Sadr called on the new Council of Representatives to hold an extraordinary session to discuss possible actions. On 8 September, the Council held its first extraordinary session under the interim Speaker and in the presence of Prime Minister Al Abadi, the Ministers for Health, Interior, Electricity, Water Resources and Reconstruction, as well as the Governor of Basrah, Asaad al-Aidani. The Council agreed on several measures to support the people of Basrah, including the deployment of a ministerial team to oversee the implementation of those measures, the release of funds to the Governorate, the provision of support for civil society reconstruction initiatives and the promotion of dialogue with youth on reforms.

11. The Government has sustained its efforts to address the demands of citizens, taking a series of administrative and security measures. On 10 September, the Prime Minister led a ministerial delegation to Basrah. In the wake of his visit, the Government issued a number of resolutions pertaining to the maintenance and rehabilitation of water and sewage facilities, the provision of funds and materials, the distribution of food allowances and the development of procedures to address unemployment in Basrah. As part of security measures, on 28 September, the Prime Minister ordered immediate action by the Ministry of Interior to investigate recent incidents of assassination and kidnapping in Basrah, Baghdad and other locations. On 2 October, the Prime Minister stated that 2,000 additional security personnel had been deployed to Basrah and called for an evaluation of the performance of provincial police forces. On 18 September, the new Speaker visited Basrah to discuss the situation with governorate officials. On 27 September, the Council of Representatives endorsed a series of recommendations, including a proposal to investigate the performance of the Ministers for Health, Water Resources and Municipalities and to request those ministries to develop a strategic plan to resolve the crisis in Basrah.

12. On 30 September, the Kurdistan Region held its fourth parliamentary elections, which were the first electoral process to be conducted by the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission. Field reports gathered by the Commission indicated that all 5,941 polling stations in 1,260 polling centres throughout the Region opened and closed on time. In addition, on 28 September, 471 polling stations in 99 polling centres were set up for the use of security forces, so they could vote in advance. Of approximately 3 million eligible voters, the Commission reported voter turnout at 58.0 per cent for regular voting and 91.7 per cent for special voting by security forces. A total of 773 candidates belonging to 29 entities ran for 111 seats. A total of 241 female candidates (31 per cent) ran for election, in line with Kurdistan parliamentary election law, which stipulates that 30 per cent of parliamentary seats be allocated to women.

13. Election day unfolded, by and large, in a peaceful and orderly fashion across the Kurdistan Region. In the days that followed, allegations of fraud and vote-rigging surfaced. On 1 October, the New Generation Movement stated it would reject the results of the elections and boycott the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region because of the alleged fraud.

14. On 1 October, the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission announced that the results of the elections would be issued only after all complaints filed by political entities had been settled. On 3 October, the Commission stated that it would delay the announcement of the preliminary results owing to outstanding complaints. On 4 October, based on a tally of 85 per cent of the ballot, partial results were announced indicating the number of votes garnered by various coalitions and political parties. The Commission has yet to announce the final results.

B. Relations between Baghdad and Erbil

15. Deliberations between the federal Government and Kurdistan Regional Government over outstanding issues were overshadowed by the negotiations on government formation. Nonetheless, progress occurred on issues related to oil and transport. On 14 August, the Federal Supreme Court held a session to rule on an appeal over the unconstitutionality of the Kurdistan Region extracting oil from its territory for direct sale. The lawsuit was brought by the Iraqi Minister for Oil against the Kurdistan Region Minister for Natural Resources. The Court ruled that the case included technical aspects which required the expertise of a legal specialist and decided to postpone the hearing until such a specialist was designated. On 3 October, the Federal Supreme Court announced that it had appointed three oil experts, who were expected to submit their report on 6 November.

16. On 19 August, the main road connecting Erbil and Kirkuk was officially reopened. It had been closed since 16 October 2017 during clashes between Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi security forces.

17. Also on 19 August, the Sunni Mihwar al-Watani Alliance visited Erbil to discuss the political process in Iraq, including the formation of the new Government. The Alliance met separately with the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Masoud Barzani, and a joint delegation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. They reiterated the need for a political agreement with written guarantees and commitments to be respected by all political parties. They decided to continue a collaborative relationship and maintain active participation in the political process. On 25 August, the Mihwar al-Watani Alliance confirmed that negotiations with the Kurdish side had reached an advanced stage in preparation for the signing of a document that could be the basis for rebuilding the State.

18. The following day, on 26 August, a joint delegation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan met with President Masum in Baghdad to consult on the formation of a large parliamentary bloc in preparation for the formation of the new Government. The delegation visited Baghdad again on 1 September to meet with political parties.

19. On 27 August, a joint delegation comprising members of Sa'iron Alliance, Nasr, National Wisdom Movement and Wataniya Alliance coalitions visited Erbil and met with Masoud Barzani and a joint delegation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The topics discussed included the formation of the new Government, the programme of the new Iraqi Council of Representatives and ways to build partnership to administer the country, implement the Constitution, respond to the demands of protesters in the southern governorates, reconstruct the liberated areas and enhance social justice.

20. On 4 October, Hadi al-Amiri (Fatah) visited Erbil and met Masoud Barzani, Kurdish Regional Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and Kurdish Regional Security Council Chair Masrour Barzani. The topics discussed included the participation of all Kurdistan parties in the government formation process, which would facilitate addressing outstanding issues between Erbil and Baghdad.

C. Security situation

21. Operations conducted by Iraqi security forces during the reporting period concentrated on pursuing remnants of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in northern and north-central Iraq, in conjunction with ongoing efforts to clear liberated areas of explosives and other hazardous materials. The capacity of Iraqi security forces to remove armed elements from cleared areas, or at least to suppress insurgent activity, is vital to the country's transition from recovery to reconstruction.

22. Iraqi civilians continue to bear the brunt of the insecurity in the country. Meanwhile, asymmetric attacks continue to target the Iraqi security forces in northern and north-central Iraq (Ninawa, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk) and in the central region (Diyala, Anbar and Baghdad).

23. In northern Iraq, Turkish airstrikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party targets continued along the border between Iraq and Turkey. On 15 August, the Armed Forces of Turkey reported the killing of Ismail Özden, a leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party in Sinjar. In reaction to the airstrikes, hundreds of Yazidis demonstrated on 16 August in Sinuni, demanding the establishment of a no-fly zone in Sinjar. On 17 August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the Turkish attacks on Sinjar and denied any coordination between Baghdad and Ankara on the airstrikes. The Ministry urged Turkey to withdraw its ground forces from Ba'shiqah as, in its stated view, their presence violated international conventions and mutual respect for territorial sovereignty. On 18 August, the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, stated that military operations would continue along the southern borders of Turkey, including inside the Sinjar and Makhmur districts of Iraq. Between 22 August and 5 September, Turkish airstrikes targeted the northern Governorates of Dahuk and Erbil. Turkish forces have reported that the attacks resulted in the deaths of more than 20 Kurdistan Workers' Party members. On 16 September, the Prime Minister of Iraq ordered the deployment of Iraqi federal border guards along the Iraq-Turkey border to protect the border and prevent violations of national sovereignty. He instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to document and report such violations to the United Nations and the National Security Council.

24. On 6 September, protesters in Basrah set fire to a number of government, media and political party buildings. No casualties were reported. On 7 September, unknown

perpetrators attacked and set fire to the Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Basrah (the Consulate has in the meantime been reopened in other premises). Protesters then attacked and set fire to the headquarters of the popular mobilization forces. During the night of 7 and 8 September, three mortars struck the International Zone in Baghdad in the vicinity of the United States Embassy. On the same day, four mortars were fired towards the United States Consulate in Basrah, next to Basrah airport. On 28 September, another instance of indirect fire was reported in the vicinity of the United States Consulate in Basrah. On the same day, the United States decided to close and evacuate its Consulate in Basrah over security concerns.

25. On 8 September, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps fired seven short-range surface-to-surface missiles at the headquarters of two Iranian opposition groups in Kuyah, northern Iraq. At least 11 persons affiliated with those groups were reportedly killed. In reaction, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ibrahim Al-Jafari, underlined the country's opposition to Iranian bombings of Iranian Kurdish communities on Iraqi soil.

26. During the reporting period, disputes arose over the structure and deployment of the popular mobilization forces. On 2 and 18 August, the Deputy Director of the Popular Mobilization Commission, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, issued three orders on the restructuring and redeployment of the popular mobilization forces, commencing in Sunni-populated areas of Ninawa. On 9 August, the popular mobilization forces began to withdraw from the Rabi'a and Zummar subdistricts of Tall Afar and from parts of Sinjar. On 21 August, the Prime Minister cancelled the orders, recalling that the Popular Mobilization Commission leadership did not have the legal authority to reorganize or redeploy the popular mobilization forces without prior consultation with the Commander-in-Chief and coordination with the Iraqi Joint Operations Command. On 24 August, the Prime Minister's office released a statement highlighting that the removal of popular mobilization forces units from large cities should not be subject to political pressure and that redeployments might offer an opportunity for terrorists to launch attacks. On 3 September, the Prime Minister declared that he would henceforth head the Popular Mobilization Commission.

D. Regional and international developments

27. There have been widespread calls among the international community for the swift formation of an inclusive, non-sectarian and pro-reform Government to respond to the aspirations of the Iraqi people. Neighbouring countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, transmitted congratulatory messages to the new Iraqi government officials for their election wins and appointments. On 3 October, the new Speaker of the Council of Representatives participated in the Arab Parliament Conference held in Cairo, where he expressed his country's aspirations for stronger relations with Arab States with regard to economic issues and fighting global terrorism.

28. In early September, escalating violence in the southern part of Iraq resulted in calls, including by the European Commission and regional neighbours, for calm and restraint on the part of the Iraqi security forces.

29. The Government of Iraq has continued to seek support from neighbouring countries and the wider international community, including the international counter-ISIL coalition and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to address the country's urgent economic, political and security challenges. The Prime Minister, accompanied by the Ministers for Oil, Agriculture and Water Resources, met the President of Turkey in Ankara on 14 August to discuss issues related to trade, transboundary water quotas, agriculture, energy and security. Reportedly, the

President of Turkey committed to providing Iraq with its water quota in full. Condemning attacks by the Kurdistan Workers' Party against neighbouring countries, the Prime Minister of Iraq stated that the National Security Council had prepared a plan to prevent such attacks through joint control of the borders with Turkey. He also expressed support for the reopening of Turkish consulates in Basrah and Mosul and the opening of a second border-crossing point on the Iraq-Turkey border to expand oil exports through Turkey.

30. On 7 August, the Prime Minister stated that although Iraq considered the sanctions by the United States on the Islamic Republic of Iran a strategic mistake, it would abide by them to protect its own interests. The next day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement calling on the international community to exert pressure on the United States Administration to withdraw the sanctions. The Prime Minister clarified, on 13 August, that his previous statement had only referred to transactions in United States dollars with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and that the Central Bank of Iraq had issued a directive to that effect. On 28 August, the Government of Iraq said it would send a delegation to the United States to request sanctions exemptions for Iraq.

31. On 1 and 2 September, Iraq hosted a meeting of the quadrilateral alliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic to discuss joint efforts in the fight against ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Following the Prime Minister's request for further NATO support, and the approval of a NATO training mission for Iraq earlier in the year, Iraq welcomed the decision by NATO to support the professionalization of the Iraqi security forces through the establishment of military schools. In addition, Operation Inherent Resolve issued a statement on 19 August confirming that United States troops remained committed to providing support for Iraq on the ground, an effort deemed essential for stabilization efforts and cooperation against ISIL.

III. Update on the activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

32. My Special Representative for Iraq and my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance continued to engage with the Independent High Electoral Commission, representatives of political parties, government officials, parliamentarians, women's groups, civil society, religious and community leaders. On 9 August, the Independent High Electoral Commission's Board of Judges announced the final electoral results. Throughout the recount process, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance visited recount centres in Baghdad, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk. Throughout the recount process, an experienced team of United Nations electoral experts provided advice and assistance.

33. In anticipation of the formation of the new Government, my Special Representative met with numerous political leaders and actors, as well as the newly elected Council of Representatives in Baghdad. My Special Representative visited Amman, Tehran and Washington, D.C., to seek regional and international support for an inclusive and balanced Government in Iraq, and also held high-level meetings in New York on the margins of the General Assembly. My Special Representative urged the newly elected parliamentarians to assume their duties and act responsibly without delay in the government formation process.

34. As part of the Mission's advocacy efforts to promote effective participation and representation of women in political and decision-making processes in Iraq, my

Special Representative and my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance met separately with Iraqi women who ran for election to the Council of Representatives. Similarly, they also met with women activists from the Iraqi Women Network and from Alliance 1325, each of which comprised more than 200 civil society representatives, lawyers, academics and media activists. Discussions with parliamentarians focused on their efforts and vision for working collaboratively across the political spectrum, including the possible establishment of a women's parliamentary caucus to promote and strengthen gender equality in Government programmes, the inclusion of women in leading positions and the adoption of laws that would help advance women's rights. My Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative continued to meet with the heads of political blocs to advocate for the meaningful inclusion of women in the government formation negotiations and their representation at all levels of decision-making in the executive branch.

35. On 3 October, a cross-sector task force on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), with support from Euromed Feminist Initiative, organized a high-level consultation meeting to develop a second national action plan on implementing Council resolution 1325 (2000). My Special Representative impressed on political leaders the need to deliver on their pledges to empower women and advance their rights as part of the democratic entitlement of all Iraqis, thus strengthening equal representation and inclusiveness.

36. In the lead-up to the parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance and the UNAMI office tasked with managing electoral affairs continued to engage with the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission to discuss progress on preparations for the elections and respond to the Commission's request for the provision of United Nations technical support, in line with the Mission's mandate and resources.

37. My Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance met with members of the Black Iraqi, Baha'i, Zoroastrian, Christian and Shabak communities in Basrah, Erbil and Ninawa as part of efforts by UNAMI to address the concerns of the diverse ethnic and religious minority communities of Iraq. In line with those efforts, my Deputy Special Representative addressed the first international conference on the human rights abuses committed against the Yazidi that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and, possibly, genocide, supporting the efforts of Iraqi and Kurdistan Region authorities to tackle impunity and bring to justice the perpetrators of those horrendous crimes.

B. Electoral assistance

38. On 9 August, the Board of Judges appointed to conduct the recount process announced the provisional results of the parliamentary elections of 12 May. During the subsequent appeal period, a total of 253 appeals were received and forwarded by the Independent High Electoral Commission to the Electoral Judicial Panel. On 16 August, the Panel completed the adjudication of all 253 appeals, well ahead of the 10-day legal time limit, which triggered the submission of the results for certification by the Federal Supreme Court. On 19 August, the Federal Supreme Court formally endorsed the list of the 329 newly elected parliamentarians, marking the start of the constitutionally mandated timeline for convening the Council of Representatives and the subsequent government formation process.

39. In line with the provisions of the third amendment to the Council of Representatives electoral law, the task of the assigned Board of Judges ended upon the certification by the Federal Supreme Court of the final election results. Although

the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission tried to resume their duties, they were barred from doing so owing to an ongoing investigation initiated by the Government concerning fraud allegations during the holding of the elections.

40. The Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission managed preparations for the holding of regional parliamentary elections on 30 September. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding signed between the Iraqi and Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commissions, the latter submitted letters to the former requesting United Nations support in organizing the regional parliamentary elections. Support by UNAMI was requested and provided in the areas of data transfer and entry, the tabulation of results, electoral complaints and dispute resolution. On 15 August, the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission published the names of 773 candidates, 241 of whom were women. The Kurdistan Commission also announced the start of the process of recruiting more than 42,000 staff for election day.

41. In addition to providing electoral technical expertise, UNAMI also deployed teams of election watchers on election day. They visited scores of polling centres and stations in all the governorates of the Kurdistan Region to get a snapshot of election day developments. My Special Representative visited polling location in Erbil, and my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance visited polling locations in Sulaymaniyah and Halabjah, and spoke to the media, urging voters to participate in the polls and highlighting the importance of strengthening and consolidating the democratic processes in the Kurdistan Region. Following his visit to the polling stations, my Special Representative met with the Board of Commissioners of the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission, who expressed appreciation and requested that United Nations electoral support be continued.

42. At the close of the submission period, a total of 1,045 complaints were submitted concerning the parliamentary elections of 30 September and the special voting of the security forces that took place on 28 September. A special panel was formed by the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission to process those complaints, with UNAMI providing advice on methodology. On 4 October, the Commission released a partial tally of the votes, based on 85 per cent of the ballot, indicating the votes garnered by the political entities that ran in the elections. Data entry of the results regarding entities and their candidates is ongoing, with the Commission aiming to announce the full results once all ballots are tabulated and the Commission completes the review and adjudication of all the complaints.

C. Human rights and rule of law developments and activities

43. Civilian casualties from 9 August to 9 October totalled 281: 96 killed, including 6 women, and 185 wounded, including 8 women. That was a far lower number than during the same period in 2017, when 708 civilian casualties were recorded (266 killed and 442 wounded). The leading cause of civilian casualties during the reporting period was improvised explosive devices. Such attacks, often claimed by ISIL, pose a threat to civilians in Baghdad, Salah al-Din, Ninawa, Kirkuk, Diyala, Anbar and Sulaymaniyah Governorates. Another leading cause of civilian casualties was small arms fire.

44. ISIL continued to kill and wound civilians, police and members of popular mobilization forces in Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din Governorates. On 18 August, in Bayya', south-western Baghdad, ISIL claimed responsibility for an improvised explosive device attack on public transport that killed three and wounded

eight more. On 10 August, at a football game in Sharqat district of Salah al-Din Governorate, ISIL gunmen shot and killed five civilians and wounded six others, including two children. In Baghdad, six explosions were carried out by unknown persons in a one-week period, killing 6 civilians and wounding 16.

45. The Iraqi authorities conducted a series of raids in and around Mosul, arresting and killing several ISIL fighters, including women fighters. Iraqi authorities also found an ISIL explosives factory in Sinjar district. On 13 August, local police arrested five Iraqi women suspected of being affiliated with ISIL at their home in the Amin neighbourhood in eastern Mosul. On 26 August, local police arrested 41 individuals, including five women, suspected of affiliation with ISIL, in the Badush and Qayyarah subdistricts of Mosul.

46. In Kirkuk and Ninawa Governorates, ISIL continued to target and kill local mayors, accusing those officials of providing information on their movements to the Government. Between 1 January and 18 August, in Ninawa Governorate, seven mayors were killed and two others wounded. On 15 August, an armed group shot and killed the mayor of the Tall al-Rumman neighbourhood in western Mosul. Similarly, on 17 August, two masked gunmen on a motorbike shot and killed the mayor of the Yarmuk neighbourhood in western Mosul.

47. Since June 2014, UNAMI has received reports of 202 mass graves, the overwhelming majority of which reportedly contain victims of ISIL. Current estimates provided to UNAMI range from 6,000 to more than 12,000 victims. UNAMI continues to advocate for the appropriate protection of the mass graves to collect, secure and preserve the evidence. In addition, UNAMI recommends that information on missing persons be centralized and greater transparency be provided with regard to the families of the missing.

48. Iraqi courts continued to issue death sentences for terrorism-related crimes. On 13 August, the Ninawa Criminal Court in Mosul sentenced an ISIL fighter to death for killing security personnel and improvised explosive device attacks in Ninawa Governorate in 2014. On 15 August, the court imposed life sentences on three defendants for providing logistical support to ISIL in Ninawa. On 16 August, the Salah al-Din Criminal Court sentenced one man to death for participating in the killing of the Police Chief of Dulu'iyah. According to the Supreme Judicial Council, as of the time of writing, 100 persons have been sentenced to death in 2018: 24 women (23 of them foreigners, including 17 from Turkey, 3 from Kyrgyzstan, 2 from Azerbaijan and 1 from Germany) and 76 men. On 16 August, the Ministry of Justice announced the execution of six defendants, without further details. That brought the total number of executions publicly announced in 2018 by the Ministry of Justice to 32. UNAMI has made repeated requests to the Ministry of Justice for more details regarding death sentences and executions, to no avail.

49. On 29 August, the Department of Yazidi Affairs in the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Kurdistan Regional Government reported that of the 6,417 Yazidis (3,548 women and 2,869 men) abducted by ISIL since August 2014, fewer than half have been freed or escaped. On the same day, the Department also reported that 3,095 Yazidis (1,845 children and 1,250 women) remained in ISIL captivity or were missing. No men remain in ISIL captivity. Those abducted have either escaped or been freed, or have been executed by ISIL.

50. Bodies of civilians continued to be recovered from the rubble in Mosul. The civilian defence corps informed UNAMI that 4,514 bodies, all civilians, had been recovered as of the time of writing.

51. UNAMI continued its monitoring of trials in Iraq (including those of alleged ISIL members) and remains concerned about the lack of consistent adherence to the

requirements of due process and a fair trial, in particular the failure of the courts to investigate allegations by defendants that confessions were obtained through torture or other forms of ill-treatment and the passive role played by defence counsel, thus undermining a defendant's right to effective counsel.

52. UNAMI continued its engagement on ISIL accountability. UNAMI provided assistance to the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), to support Iraqi efforts to hold the group accountable for its crimes committed in Iraq. During the first visit of the Special Adviser to Iraq, from 6 to 14 August, UNAMI staff briefed the Special Adviser on their concerns regarding the country's compliance with national law and international human rights law and standards. UNAMI also supported the Special Adviser's meetings with key government actors, judicial officials, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Commission on Missing Persons.

53. During the reporting period, public protests continued in 10 governorates with regard to the lack of employment opportunities and basic services and the ubiquity of corruption. According to the Independent High Commission for Human Rights, reported casualties between 9 August and 3 October from the Basrah demonstrations reached 18 civilians killed (17 men and 1 woman), 155 civilians injured (all men) and 43 members of the security forces injured. On 6 September, the bodies of four men were received by the Forensic Department in Jamhouriyah Hospital in Basrah. According to several reports, three of them had been shot in the head. On 25 September, Suad Habeeb Lijlaj al-Ali, a human rights activist, was killed in the Abbasiyah area of Basrah. UNAMI has been calling for prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into those killings. Since 1 September, according to the Independent High Commission for Human Rights, 27 men have been arrested in Basrah for participating in demonstrations; 18 of them have been released, but the remaining 9 are being detained under judicial orders. UNAMI continues to monitor the issue of access by families to their relatives in detention in Basrah.

54. On 14 August, the Independent High Commission for Human Rights and authorities in the Kurdistan Region met and agreed, in accordance with Law No. 53 of 2008 of the Commission, to open a regional office affiliated with the Commission in Erbil. Attempts in 2012 to open such an office were prevented by the conditions prevailing in the country.

55. The country task force on monitoring and reporting, co-chaired by UNAMI and the United Nations Children's Fund, verified 16 grave violations against children that resulted in the killing of 3 boys and 4 girls and the maiming of 14 boys and 4 girls. The incidents mainly related to explosive hazards and weapons in Anbar, Karbala', Kirkuk, Ninawa and Dhi Qar Governorates. There were also four additional incidents of killing and maiming which have been reported but not yet verified. During the reporting period, the country task force initiated discussions with the Government and submitted for consideration a draft action plan to prevent and end the recruitment and use of children by the popular mobilization forces. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated that they would revert with comments and feedback after formation of the new Government.

56. The Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements Technical Working Group on conflict-related sexual violence has increased its efforts to analyse trends and patterns on conflict-related sexual violence, with a view to enhancing coordination in programmatic responses, advocacy and accountability. To that end, on 16 August, the Working Group undertook a mission to an internally displaced persons camp in Ninawa Governorate to examine the extent to which indicators on

conflict-related sexual violence were prevalent in the camp, identify gaps in response to conflict-related sexual violence and propose recommendations.

D. Humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development

57. The humanitarian context in Iraq is entering a new stage. More than 1.8 million people remain displaced inside Iraq, and many express an unwillingness to return to their areas of origin owing to concerns regarding security and community reconciliation, the destruction of property, insufficient services and livelihoods and the lack of progress in clearing explosive hazards. While the decline in the number of internally displaced persons to less than 2 million (after a high of more than 5 million) is a significant achievement, the focus must now be placed on integration and resettlement into third locations inside Iraq. Additional attention and resources also need to be directed towards prioritizing the cases of internally displaced persons who need protection, especially with regard to families who have perceived ISIL affiliations.

58. Humanitarian actors reached 382,621 vulnerable Iraqis with some form of humanitarian assistance during the reporting period. Some partners reported that delays in disbursements and shortages in funding continued to negatively affect their programming; by the end of August, the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan had received only $343 million (60 per cent) of the $569 million requested.

59. With regard to stabilization, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization reached a new milestone by completing more than 1,200 projects across all major sectors in 31 areas of operation. Hospitals in Ramadi and Fallujah are now under construction, and together will support nearly a million women, children and men in Anbar Governorate. The second phase of the Hamdaniyah Hospital in Ninawa is under way, while the completed surgical wards, maternity ward and other repaired facilities are already in operation. Outside the health sector, bridges were an important focus for expanded stabilization during the reporting period, with the completion of the iconic Fallujah Iron Bridge, following the removal by experts from the Mine Action Service of explosive hazards found underwater. Repairs to another three major bridges are ongoing in Fallujah and Ramadi. UNDP has also begun a vital housing project to support returnees in western Mosul.

60. The United Nations country team continued to support longer-term recovery and reconstruction efforts. The recovery and resilience programme, established at the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq in February 2018, finalized its results framework to define expected impacts in four key development areas. In addition, the programme's terms of reference for its funding mechanism were drafted in close coordination with the Government of Iraq, the World Bank and the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

61. In September 2018, my Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator participated in an international conference for the rehabilitation of the city of Mosul entitled "Revive the spirit of Mosul", organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Government of Iraq, in Paris. During the conference, a high-level initiative to support the reconstruction of heritage sites and the revival of cultural life and educational institutions in Mosul was launched. The United Arab Emirates has funded the ongoing restoration and reconstruction of the Nuri mosque and its Hadba' minaret.

62. UNDP is also establishing and maintaining local peace committees in Ninawa, Salah al-Din, Anbar and Diyala Governorates. During August, training sessions on

conflict management and mediation were delivered to four of those committees, targeting 100 community leaders (with a focus on minorities), to strengthen skills and capacities for community reconciliation at the local level.

63. Also in August, UNDP began a pilot project with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to collect stories from women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in newly liberated areas. The initiative will develop a new therapeutic approach to support victims and provide information to the Government of Iraq as it refines its social protection and transitional justice policies.

64. From 3 to 5 September, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Government of Iraq and the Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster rolled out inter-agency standard operating procedures for gender-based violence in the south-central region of Iraq. They consist of guiding principles, procedures, roles and responsibilities for all actors in Iraq with regard to preventing and responding to gender-based violence; they also facilitate coordination and referrals to provide the immediate support that survivors of gender-based violence need. In addition, from 9 to 19 September UNFPA held a second stage of training to strengthen the capacity of the staff of women's shelters.

65. In August, the Mine Action Service began a 15-week training on the disposal of explosive ordnance improvised explosive devices for police officers from Diyala, Ninawa, Anbar, Muthanna, Salah al-Din, Wasit and Kirkuk Governorates to increase the capacity of the Government to provide critical life-saving responses to suspected explosive hazards in affected liberated areas.

66. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations supported the rehabilitation of land and agricultural infrastructure for 4,000 conflict-affected people in 12 villages in Salah al-Din and Ninawa Governorates. That work has allowed farming activities to resume and introduced cash flows that have revitalized local markets and involved local communities to ensure sustainable results.

67. More traditional development work is increasingly building on stabilization, recovery and reconciliation. In August, the United Nations country team established a programme management team to better coordinate development activities across the United Nations system in Iraq. In response to the growing public demand for employment opportunities, the country team also formed a working group on job creation and livelihoods, which is co-chaired by UNDP and the World Bank.

68. On 5 September, UNESCO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launched, for the first time in Iraq, a national competency-based training programme targeting 300 young people, one third of them women, that meets the requirements of an agreed technical and vocational qualifications framework for Iraq. The training is focused on practical skills and, over the course of six months, will lead to recognized qualifications aligned to the needs of the labour market.

69. As the Government rebuilds its health systems, the World Health Organization (WHO) is working closely with the Government through the Ministry of Health and other line ministries to agree on an action plan for the period 2018–2021. The plan will define priority areas where WHO will support the Government in rebuilding health systems that can substantially contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages, with three interlinked strategic priorities to achieve universal health coverage, address health emergencies and promote healthier populations.

70. UNDP extended technical and financial support to the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the federal level, in early August UNDP and the Ministry of Planning began a new project

that focuses on the localization of the Goals with a view to channelling assistance on the Goals across Iraq at the national and subnational levels.

71. In August, the International Organization for Migration finalized a demographic survey of the Kurdistan Region in partnership with the Kurdistan Region Ministry of Planning and UNFPA. The survey provides a comprehensive profile of the current population's demographics, including employment and income, housing, household possessions and literacy and education levels. The survey will support the capacity of the Government to shape its policies and deliver effective services to citizens.

72. Finally, UNDP held a national consultation in support of the efforts of the Government of Iraq to draft a strategy on critical infrastructure protection. The objective is to put in place capacities and systems to ensure that the country's major facilities and important installations are protected from any form of risks triggered by natural, human-caused or technological hazards and security threats.

E. Security and operational issues

73. The United Nations in Iraq continued to implement robust security risk mitigation measures to provide maximum safety and security to its agencies in the delivery of their programmes in a constantly fluid security environment. Mandatory security support for its political, humanitarian and development engagements and activities in the country remained closely coordinated with the Government of Iraq. The result of that strengthened coordination has been the successful provision of security to United Nations operations and personnel.

74. The implementation of the recommendations of the independent external review continued. The review of the function and staffing of the Integrated Coordination Office for Development and Humanitarian Affairs was completed in July and has led to a refocusing of the tasks of the Office of the Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Affairs and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. In that context UNAMI has identified areas for potential efficiencies, to be presented as appropriate to the relevant United Nations budgetary bodies. In response to the review's recommendations on establishing integrated teams, UNAMI and the United Nations country team are working more collaboratively by including representatives in their respective planning and strategy groups, such as the operations management team of the United Nations country team; strategy sessions on the crisis in the south of Iraq; the joint country team and UNAMI task force on coordination, common action and information-sharing; and a joint assessment mission which recently concluded the review of United Nations security architecture, pending the finalization of its report.

75. In support of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), the Mission has secured the Government's agreement to refurbish and reallocate an existing building in the International Zone, currently managed by UNAMI, to the Investigative Team. Simultaneously, the Mission has begun the procurement process needed to start renovating the structure, in coordination with and at the request of the Investigative Team.

76. Regarding progress made on the integrated United Nations compound in Baghdad, the construction of residential building "C" is likely to be completed by December 2018. That will add 116 accommodation units for staff. Meanwhile, a contract has been issued for the construction of a new office building that is expected to be completed by March 2020, providing 228 additional workstations for UNAMI and the United Nations country team.

77. The United Nations system has agreed on a local cost-sharing budget that will include the expenses of the United Nations Guard Unit: the Mission will cover 70 per cent of the Unit's costs, while the United Nations country team will cover 30 per cent. The costs are expected to be offset by contributions to common security arrangements made by the Investigative Team once it is deployed.

IV. Observations

78. I congratulate Nadia Murad for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, a recognition she receives on behalf of all Yazidi and other Iraqis who were victims of and gravely suffered from the atrocities committed by ISIL. That recognition gives impetus to the efforts to locate the more than 1,000 Yazidi and other women and children who remain missing after their kidnapping by ISIL, and to the efforts to hold accountable those responsible for those crimes.

79. I congratulate the people of Iraq on the completion of their 2018 national electoral process, paving the way for the ongoing process of government formation. The orderly, smooth conduct of the recount and subsequent processes showcases the capacity within Iraqi institutions to address electoral-related complaints and appeals in line with established constitutional and legal parameters. I commend the efforts of the Independent High Electoral Commission staff and the Board of Judges on the partial manual recount process and welcome the certification by the Federal Supreme Court of the 2018 parliamentary election results. With the electoral process completed, it is now time for the country's electoral and other institutions to review lessons learned from recent experiences, with the aim of taking forward electoral-related reforms that meet public expectations. The United Nations remains available to support and engage with those processes.

80. The first Council of Representatives session held on 3 September, in accordance with the constitutional time frame, was a positive step towards establishing the new Government. I urge all political actors to remain committed to upholding peace and completing the formation of the Government in accordance with constitutional and legal provisions. I urge all political leaders, including the newly elected Council of Representatives and Prime Minister-designate, to act without delay in taking all the necessary steps to establish a new national, pro-reform Government that will effectively respond to people's longstanding needs and deliver on their valid demands.

81. I welcome the smooth, democratic election of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, the election of Barham Salih as President of Iraq and the appointment of Adil Abdul-Mahdi as the Prime Minister-designate. The United Nations looks forward to working with the new constitutional leadership, the Council of Representatives and the future Governments in Iraq and in the Kurdistan Region. At the same time, I regret that none of the eminently qualified female political figures have so far been elected to senior leadership positions and I urge members of the Council of Representatives and political leaders to be true to their pledges and to elect women to senior leadership positions in the Council of Representatives and the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region, as well as future Governments in Baghdad and Erbil.

82. I note with grave concern the public service crisis in Basrah and other southern governorates, deplore the violence during protests and regret the casualties. I urge calm and call upon the authorities to avoid using disproportionate force against the demonstrators, provide the necessary protection for the people of Basrah and other governorates, ensure human rights while protecting law and order and investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the outbreak of violence. I call upon the

Government of Iraq to do its utmost to respond to the people's rightful demands for clean water and electricity supplies, as a matter of urgency.

83. Following the Iraqi parliamentary elections of 12 May, relations between Baghdad and Erbil have displayed a positive trend. The elections provided Kurdistan political parties with an opportunity to participate constructively in the national political process. The federal Government continued to pay part of the salaries of civil servants in the Kurdistan Region and reopened the main road between Erbil and Kirkuk. However, many political issues have yet to be resolved. I am encouraged by the level of communication between Baghdad and Erbil during the government formation process, the commitment of both sides to expedite that process and the desire to resolve their outstanding issues on the basis of the Iraqi Constitution.

84. I emphasize that UNAMI remains strongly committed to providing all possible support to the Iraqi people, as well as to the Government of Iraq, in their quest to form an inclusive, non-sectarian and pro-reform Government. It is imperative that Iraq be allowed to pursue its own national interests in the process of government formation and not become a proxy theatre for confrontation by regional interests. Given the current social and economic pressures that the Government of Iraq is facing, I repeat my previous calls for all pledges made at the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in February 2018, to be honoured.

85. I would like to thank my outgoing Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, for his service at a challenging time in the country and the region. I would also like to express my gratitude to the national and international staff of UNAMI for their continued efforts in implementing the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq.

United Nations S/2018/976

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 October 2018

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Twentieth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013)

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), covers developments pertaining to the issues of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, since the issuance of my previous report, dated 10 July 2018 (S/2018/683).

2. On 23 September, in New York, my Special Representative for Iraq met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, to discuss ongoing efforts in the search for missing Kuwaiti persons and property. My Special Representative reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to implementing its mandate and outlined some of the current activities of the Mission, including support provided in transporting located property to Kuwait.

II. Recent activities with regard to the repatriation and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, or their remains

3. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Defence of Iraq carried out excavation and exploration works at the Karbala' and Samawah sites. Human remains previously recovered from the Karbala' site and sent to the Iraqi Medico-Legal Directorate for DNA analysis and genetic profiling have proven to belong to a single person. The results were passed on to the Kuwait delegation for cross-checking and were later found not to have a corresponding match in their records. No human remains or grave-like features were found at the Samawah site. The Ministry of Defence of Iraq continued its investigation of the naval base site in Kuwait and of the Khamisiyah, Radwaniyah, Sulaymaniyah and Salman Pak sites in Iraq. The Ministry followed up with witnesses and with relevant government bodies to verify the information it had acquired in its efforts to identify exact burial locations. While there were no further developments, the sites in question will remain open as the Ministry continues to search for more information. Notably, the Ministry established contact with a new witness regarding a potential burial site in Najaf Governorate. By disseminating calls in newspapers and on satellite television, most recently on 17 July 2018, the Office of the Spokesperson of the Ministry continued to encourage witnesses who might have information on missing Kuwaiti persons and missing Kuwaiti property to come forward.

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4. On 8 July, my Deputy Special Representative for Iraq for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Alice Walpole, briefed the Ambassador of Kuwait to Iraq, Salem Ghassab Mohammed al-Zamanan, on the latest efforts undertaken by UNAMI in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013). The Ambassador emphasized the significance of the resolution of the file on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property for the normalization of relations between the two countries. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry of Defence of Iraq, in particular for its expertise, information-sharing practices and proactive approach. He reiterated his support for the UNAMI proposal to undertake a survey of mass grave sites using ground-penetrating radar, which members of the tripartite mechanism are currently considering.

5. On 25 July, UNAMI attended, in its observer capacity, the 104th meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the tripartite mechanism in Kuwait. In a positive development, the delegations of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America provided the mechanism with an update on information they had shared with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) pertaining to available maps, imagery and analysis of imagery from the 1990–1991 period — material that might help to identify and pinpoint potential burial locations. The Committee indicated that it had finally received sets of satellite imagery of the Samawah site dating back to the years 1990 to 1992. ICRC confirmed that the imagery was being analysed by its experts and that their findings would be shared at subsequent meetings. UNAMI updated the tripartite mechanism on its efforts to gain access to relevant archives of the United Nations Special Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, which might contain useful information on the Salman Pak site. Having exhausted all available possibilities for identifying reliable witnesses and information, the members of the tripartite mechanism agreed to close the file on the al-Razi site in Diyala Governorate in Iraq. The members further agreed to continue joint Iraq-Kuwait-ICRC excavation and exploration works at the Samawah and Karbala' sites.

6. UNAMI set out its proposal to undertake a ground-penetrating radar pilot project to conduct mass grave site surveys in Iraq, with the help of the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy. The first step would be to analyse relevant satellite imagery as a prerequisite for further action.

7. ICRC informed the members of the mechanism that the report on the ICRC review project, integrating feedback from members, was being finalized and would be shared once completed. The final document will form the basis for an action plan to be shared with delegations at the 105th meeting of the Technical Subcommittee.

III. Recent activities with regard to the return of Kuwaiti property

8. During the reporting period, no progress was made on the issue of the return of Kuwaiti property. UNAMI has been in communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq and the Embassy of Kuwait in Baghdad to schedule an official handover of the first package of Kuwaiti property that has been located. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq expressed its readiness to submit the Kuwaiti property to UNAMI for safekeeping until the date of the transfer is set by the parties. UNAMI has already undertaken the necessary logistical preparations, should both sides reach an agreement. According to officials from the Ministry, the property comprises a sword, videotapes and approximately 3,000 books. The Ministry also continued its efforts to collect and itemize the remainder of located Kuwaiti property. UNAMI has proposed dates for a working-level meeting between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of Iraq, the Embassy of Kuwait in Baghdad and UNAMI to discuss the necessary arrangements.

9. On 8 July, during the meeting with my Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Al-Zamanan welcomed the readiness of UNAMI to provide air transport for items of property that had been uncovered by Iraq and to facilitate and observe the official handover.

IV. Observations

10. As in previous reports, I would like to emphasize the critically important role that the closure of the file on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, plays in normalizing relations between the two countries.

11. Although tangible results have yet to be achieved in the search for missing persons, some progress has been made through the efforts of the Ministry of Defence of Iraq. I commend the Government of Iraq on its determination to continue to pursue the matter, including by carrying out excavation and exploration missions, identifying new witnesses and collecting information to complement the search, and I am confident that its resolve to bring this humanitarian file to closure will bear results. I would also like to thank the Government of Kuwait for its continued positive and constructive engagement on a matter of great sensitivity and national importance.

12. A number of positive developments have demonstrated the commitment of all members of the tripartite mechanism to persevere, notwithstanding the challenges and the accumulated frustration from the lack of results. Discussions during the most recent meeting of the Technical Subcommittee were informative and constructive. The acquisition of new imagery and mapping material provided by the individual members of the tripartite mechanism is another promising step in obtaining much-needed information. I would like to thank the members of the mechanism in this regard and encourage them to provide continuing support. Nevertheless, the procurement of field equipment and the provision of forensic, DNA, and anthropological training and capacity-building for Iraqi and Kuwaiti technical teams remain major challenges and are integral to progress on the file. The support of the international community in those areas is thus paramount.

13. ICRC remains a valuable actor in this process, and I thank them for supporting and guiding these efforts. I am confident that the new action plan, which will be developed on the basis of the findings of the ICRC review project, has the potential to reinvigorate the process. I hope that the efforts of UNAMI to provide additional information and to support the mechanism by implementing a ground-penetrating radar pilot project will contribute substantively to this important humanitarian effort.

14. While I welcome the ongoing discussions between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Iraq and Kuwait on setting a date for the official handover of already located Kuwaiti property, I urge both sides to move the process forward expeditiously, as it has been pending for over a year. UNAMI remains ready to facilitate the transfer of identified property and observe the official handover. I also urge the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq to make further efforts in its search for the missing national archives of Kuwait and to explore new avenues to advance the process, including through a public outreach campaign.

15. My Special Representative, Deputy Special Representative and the staff of UNAMI remain proactive and fully committed to promoting and facilitating efforts in support of this important mandate.

United Nations S/2018/977

Security Council

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31 October 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to the request of the Security Council in its resolution 2409 (2018), concerning the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I have the honour to submit the 30-day update, covering the period from 29 September to 26 October 2018, on political and technical progress towards the holding of elections on 23 December 2018 and obstacles to the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Update of the Secretary-General on progress in the electoral process and implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 26 October 2018

1. The present update, which covers developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 29 September to 26 October 2018, is submitted pursuant to resolution 2409 (2018), in which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a written update every 30 days on political and technical progress towards the holding of elections on 23 December 2018 and on obstacles to the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement.

I. Key political developments related to the electoral process and the implementation of the political agreement

2. Political developments were marked by ongoing preparations for the 23 December elections. Following the publication, on 19 September, of the final list of candidates for the presidential and national legislative elections, political parties and groupings have been gearing up for participation in the upcoming polls.

3. Subsequent to the invalidation of the presidential candidacies of some opposition leaders, as well as the inability of Moïse Katumbi of Ensemble pour le changement to submit his candidacy, opposition parties strove to define a joint programme and to rally behind a single presidential candidate. Those efforts culminated in a political rally in Kinshasa, organized on 29 September by the leaders of seven opposition parties, namely Adolphe Muzito of Unis pour la République, Félix Tshisekedi of Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, Freddy Matungulu of Congo Na Biso, Jean-Pierre Bemba of Mouvement de libération du Congo, Martin Fayulu of Engagement pour la citoyenneté et le développement and Moïse Katumbi and Vital Kamerhe of Union pour la nation congolaise. The leaders called for the timely holding of elections on 23 December, but strongly rejected the use of the voting machines and requested a further review of the voter registry to examine why 16 per cent of voters had been registered without fingerprints. The opposition leaders also declared their commitment to presenting a single presidential candidate in the upcoming elections.

4. Many civil society organizations also expressed reservations about the voting machines. In a communiqué dated 5 October, the Comité laïc de coordination announced the launch of an information and sensitization campaign to challenge the use of the voting machines, highlighted the need to revise the voter registry and warned of the risk of post-electoral chaos. That same day, the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo encouraged the Government to implement the confidence-building measures contained in the 31 December 2016 political agreement and urged the Independent National Electoral Commission to find a consensus on the contentious issues surrounding the electoral process. In a similar vein, the President of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process, Joseph Olenghankoy, met with key national stakeholders to advocate for consensus on the voting machines and the voter registry.

5. On 4 October, the Independent National Electoral Commission held a meeting with the 21 presidential candidates or their representatives to exchange information and views on the electoral process. The President of the Commission, Corneille Nangaa, assured the participants that the Commission would take steps to address the

concerns that were raised, including by providing support to political parties for the training of their electoral observers on the use of the voting machines. Participants agreed to pursue efforts through a technical commission to address points of disagreement.

6. A follow-up meeting was held on 10 October between the Commission and political interlocutors. However, no consensus was reached on the terms of reference for the activities of the technical commission. Following this meeting, presidential candidates Félix Tshisekedi, Freddy Matungulu, Martin Fayulu and Vital Kamerhe issued a statement reiterating, inter alia, their concerns about the voting machines and the voter registry and warning against a constitutional void if the elections were not held on 23 December. Subsequently, in a declaration issued on 11 October on behalf of the Congolese political opposition, Mr. Muzito, Mr. Tshisekedi, Mr. Matungulu, Mr. Bemba, Mr. Fayulu, Mr. Katumbi and Mr. Kamerhe reiterated their determination to participate in credible, transparent and inclusive elections on 23 December, condemned "the contemptuous attitude" of the President of the Commission and called upon the Congolese people to mobilize and demand the use of paper ballots in lieu of the voting machines. In a statement dated 15 October, another nine presidential candidates, Jean-Philibert Mabaya, Joseph Mba Maluta, Marie-Josée Ifoku, Tryphon Kin-Kiey Mulumba, Noël Tshiani, Radjabho Tebabho Soborabo, Seth Kikuni, Sylvain Masheke and Théodore Ngoy, also called for the non-use of voting machines, an audit of the procurement process of the machines and the removal from the voter registry of all voters without fingerprints.

7. On 19 October, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, chaired a meeting with government officials, members of Parliament, the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process and the Independent National Electoral Commission to discuss progress made in the electoral process.

8. Meanwhile, the Front commun pour le Congo geared up its activities in support of its presidential candidate, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary. On 1 October, Mr. Ramazani Shadary returned from a visit to South Africa, where he met with the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, senior government officials and the leadership of the African National Congress to discuss, among other issues, the ongoing electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

II. Key electoral developments related to the implementation of the political agreement

A. Electoral developments

9. The display of provisional voter lists started on 3 September at some branches of the Independent National Electoral Commission and was progressively extended to all branches for a period of 30 days. However, owing to technical constraints, not all 171 branches published the provisional lists, and roll-out at the polling centres was slow. On 4 October, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Henri Mova Sakanyi, held a meeting on the participation of women in the electoral process, during which he committed to enhancing security for women candidates.

10. On 4 October, the Commission received 20 containers with approximately 11,900 voting machines that had been delivered to the port of Matadi. The Commission stated that the remaining voting machines were expected to arrive in multiple shipments at the ports of Matadi, Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania) and Mombasa (Kenya) by 5 November. The Vice-President of the Commission announced on 12 October that the Government had disbursed an

additional $56 million to the Commission, bringing the total amount disbursed to more than $300 million out of the $432 million budgeted for the elections.

11. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) continued to provide technical assistance to the Commission. Through its field sections covering 18 of the 26 provinces, the Mission provided advisory support to the Commission in the areas of warehousing, data management and development and implementation of training strategies and procedures for 440,000 polling staff. MONUSCO also assisted the Commission in supporting the participation of women and put in place training modules on networking and ways to strengthen the communication skills of female candidates.

B. Restrictions on political space and violence related to the implementation of the political agreement in the electoral context

12. Restrictions on democratic space continued, with some exceptions. Several public events were banned by the Congolese authorities, and several cases of arbitrary arrests and intimidation relating to the exercise of fundamental freedoms were reported.

13. A demonstration organized by the Lutte pour le changement on 1 October in Kananga, Kasai Central, and an opposition rally held in Kinshasa on 29 September took place peacefully. The Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo commended the peaceful demonstration in Kinshasa as a positive and encouraging sign. However, on 13 October in Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga, local authorities, citing security concerns, reversed their initial decision to allow a rally by Ensemble pour le changement.

14. Meanwhile, opposition and civil society groups denounced the misuse of State resources, including the media and security services, for pre-campaign purposes by the Majorité présidentielle, as provincial authorities reportedly supported outreach activities in favour of the Front commun pour le Congo.

15. Restrictions on freedom of expression remained a source of concern, with new incidents documented. On 29 and 30 September, journalists were intimidated in Bukavu, South Kivu, and in Kisangani, Tshopo, while exercising their functions. Furthermore, access to media remained restricted, and in Lisala, Mongala, authorities reportedly suspended programmes produced by local radio stations allegedly affiliated to the political opposition.

C. Confidence-building measures

16. No meaningful progress was made in the implementation of the confidence-building measures contained in the 31 December 2016 political agreement. According to the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, no political prisoners from among the cases mentioned in the agreement were released and at least 130 political prisoners remained in detention, including civil society activists and human rights defenders. In contrast, the Government claimed that no political prisoners remained in custody and asserted that some political actors were serving sentences for criminal convictions. On 10 October, the trial of Moïse Katumbi on charges of recruiting mercenaries resumed at the Court of Cassation but was subsequently suspended on procedural grounds.

III. Good offices efforts for the implementation of the political agreement

17. During the period under review, my Special Representative held separate meetings with several presidential candidates to encourage constructive participation in the electoral process. In the same vein, she met with the Chief of Staff of the President and the Chair of the Strategic Committee of the Front commun pour le Congo, Néhémie Mwilanya Wilondja, and held consultations with Ambassadors of the Southern African Development Community who were based in Kinshasa. Discussions with these stakeholders revolved, inter alia, around building confidence in the electoral process with a focus on ways to resolve disagreement over the voting machines, the integrity of the voter registry and implementation of the confidence-building measures envisaged in the 31 December 2016 political agreement.

18. At the regional level, my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region continued to engage key signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region in support of the country's political and electoral process.

19. Regional organizations also continued to pursue advocacy efforts. At the ninth meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Framework, held in Kampala on 8 October, Heads of State of the region "encouraged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all concerned national stakeholders to continue with their efforts to create conducive conditions for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections on 23 December, in full respect of the 31 December 2016 agreement". At the invitation of Congolese authorities, the African Union Commission and the Southern African Development Community are preparing to deploy electoral observers.

IV. Observations

20. I welcome the steady progress made in the implementation of the electoral calendar and the fact that all national stakeholders are actively engaged in the electoral process, in the spirit of the 31 December 2016 political agreement. This reflects the genuine aspiration of the Congolese people to choose their leaders in credible and peaceful elections on 23 December 2018, culminating in the country's first ever democratic handover of power.

21. I am concerned by the level of distrust felt by civil society actors and opposition parties regarding the electoral management bodies and key elements of the electoral process, as demonstrated by their rejection of the voting machines and lack of confidence in the voter registry, both of which have become a rallying point for the opposition. I welcome the consultations between the Independent National Electoral Commission and the presidential candidates that began on 4 October. I remain convinced that common ground can be found through dialogue and I urge all national stakeholders to put their partisan interests aside and work towards building a consensus on the way forward.

22. Equally worrying are reports of continued restrictions imposed by the Government on the political space, of intimidation of political activists and human rights defenders and of their lack of access to public media. These constraints work against the creation of a conducive environment for credible and peaceful elections. I commend the restraint demonstrated by opposition party activists and the security services during the opposition meetings of 29 September in Kinshasa and stress that this should be the norm. I therefore reiterate my call upon the national authorities to

lift the general ban on public demonstrations and uphold the rights of Congolese citizens to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

23. With the elections less than two months away, the process has entered a critical phase. Trust in the fairness of the process and the credibility of the polls are key prerequisites for acceptance of the results. There is an urgent need for meaningful action to build confidence among key stakeholders, in line with the provisions of the 31 December 2016 political agreement. The release of political prisoners and prisoners of opinion would be a positive development in this regard. In this context, I encourage regional actors to continue supporting the political and electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to remain engaged in the post-electoral period.

24. I respect the commitment of the Congolese authorities to fully funding the electoral process from national resources and call upon them to ensure that disbursements to the Independent National Electoral Commission are made in a timely and transparent manner. I reiterate the readiness of the United Nations to provide technical and logistical support for the upcoming polls, as mandated by the Security Council.

18-18306

United Nations S/2018/978

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Letter dated 31 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to submit herewith the decisions of the meeting of Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held in Khartoum on 22 October 2018 (see annex). The meeting was convened pursuant to the decisions reached by the IGAD Heads of State and Government during the thirty-third Extraordinary Summit, held in Addis Ababa on 12 September 2018.

Having brought this matter to your kind attention, I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omer Dahab Fadl **Mohamed**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Decisions of the meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development held in Khartoum on 22 October 2018

The IGAD Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces met in Khartoum, Sudan, on 22 October 2018, and His Excellency General (psc) Awad Mohammed Ahmad Ibn Ouf, the Minister of Defence of Sudan, opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates and wishing them fruitful deliberations. The meeting was chaired by General Kamal Abdelmarouf, Chief of Joint Staff of the Sudan Armed Forces, upon request from General Seare Mekonen, Chief of General Staff of Ethiopia.

The meeting was attended by General Seare Mekonen, Chief of General Staff of Ethiopia; General Kamal Abdelmarouf, Chief of Joint Staff of the Sudan Armed Forces; General Gabriel Jok Riak Makol, Chief of Defence Forces of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces; General Patrick Nyamvumba, Chief of the Rwanda Defence Staff; Brigadier General Ali Mohamed Taher, Deputy Chief of Defence Forces of Djibouti; Lieutenant General Robert Kariuki Kibochi, Vice-Chief of Defence Forces of the Kenya Defence Forces; Brigadier General Bile Ibrahim Adam, Vice-Chief of Defence Forces of Somalia; and Major General Peter Elwelu, Commander of Land Forces of Uganda.

Chapter I. References

The meeting was convened pursuant to the decisions of the Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government reached during the thirty-third Extraordinary Summit on 12 September 2018, which, among other things:

(a) Resolved that IGAD shall engage the United Nations Security Council to ensure that the Regional Protection Force is fully deployed to execute its mandate in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2304 (2016) and 2406 (2018), and shall request for a further review of its mandate to allow Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti and Somalia as guarantors, to contribute forces to enhance the protection and security throughout the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; and

(b) Mandated the IGAD Chiefs of Staff to assess the operational needs and elaborate the necessary tasks of the Regional Protection Force in light of the current situation on the ground, and the prospected expansion, as a basis for a securing endorsement from the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council.

Chapter II. Decisions

Following a briefing on the current security situation in South Sudan by General Gabriel Jok Riak Makol, Chief of Defence Forces of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), the Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces deliberated extensively on the modalities for the implementation of the IGAD Heads of State directives and decided as follows:

1. To establish an assessment team comprising two representatives from each of the troop-contributing (3+4) countries (total: 14) that would visit the Republic of South Sudan to assess the current situation and present a report to the IGAD countries'

Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces in their second meeting, on 15 November 2018, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2. Sudan is to nominate the chairperson of the Assessment Team and the Team is to start its mission in South Sudan within seven days.

3. South Sudan is to assist the Assessment Team in its work.

4. To request the IGAD Special Envoy to facilitate all the logistical needs of the Team, and the African Union, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism and all other partners to provide the necessary assistance during the Assessment Team's mission.

5. Agreed on the terms of reference for the Team (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) General Kamal Abdelmarouf
Chief of Joint Staff
Republic of Sudan

(*Signed*) General Gabriel Jok Riak Makol
Chief of Defence Forces
Republic of South Sudan

(*Signed*) Brigadier General Ali Mohamed Taher
Deputy Chief of Defence Forces
Republic of Djibouti

(*Signed*) Brigadier General Bile Ibrahim Adam
Vice-Chief of Defence Forces
Republic of Somalia

(*Signed*) General Seare Mekonen
Chief of General Staff
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

(*Signed*) General Patrick Nyamvumba
Chief of Defence Staff
Republic of Rwanda

(*Signed*) Lieutenant General Robert Kariuki Kibochi
Vice-Chief of Defence Forces
Republic of Kenya

(*Signed*) Major General Peter Elwelu
Commander of Land Forces
Republic of Uganda

Enclosure

Terms of reference for the Joint Technical Assessment Team

Reference

1. With reference to the meeting of the IGAD Chiefs of Staff/Forces held in Khartoum, Sudan, on 22 October 2018, which decided to compose a team to assess the security situation and tasks of the Regional Protection Force in the Republic of South Sudan in accordance with the communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government of 12 September 2018 in Addis Ababa.

Composition

2. The Team shall be composed of two senior officers with a rank of not less than colonel from each of the IGAD member States, to be led by Sudan, deputized by Ethiopia.

Time frame

3. The team shall report back to the Chiefs of Defence Staff/Forces on 15 November 2018.

Tasks

4. The team shall perform the following tasks:

   a. Assess the security situation on the ground in South Sudan in full coordination with SSPDF and other stakeholders (UNMISS, African Union);

   b. Submit a report to the next meeting of the IGAD Chiefs of Staff/Forces within the time frame mentioned;

   c. Assess the current operational status of the Regional Protection Force and viability within the UNMISS mandate.

Procedures

5. The team shall hold its meetings in the Republic of South Sudan, to be facilitated by SSPDF.

6. Each member State shall send names of their representatives within three days of signing this document.

7. The IGAD Special Envoy shall coordinate and facilitate the administration and logistics, which include travel, accommodation, food.

United Nations S/2018/979

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 31 October 2018 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that your letter dated 24 October 2018 (S/2018/955) concerning the expansion of the remit of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan to cover the Horn of Africa region has been brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council. They take note of the information contained in the letter.

(*Signed*) Sacha Sergio **Llorentty Soliz**
President of the Security Council

18-18314 (E) 011118

Please recycle

United Nations S/2018/980

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 November 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 31 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 30 and 31 October 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

18-18626 (E) 071118 071118

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (30 October 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire: three in Hama Governorate and one in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out two humanitarian operations: in Tabiyah, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were distributed; and in Hashimiyah, Hama Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were distributed.

In total, 1,976 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,092 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (31 October 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The number of violations by illegal armed groups active in the Idlib de-escalation area has decreased.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported one incident of gunfire in Ladhiqiyah Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out two humanitarian operations: in Aqraba, Dar'a Governorate, 300 food parcels with a total weight of 1.29 tons were distributed; and in Tall Istabl, Aleppo Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were distributed.

In total, 1,978 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,095 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.